THE SHAKERITE

Dec 17, 2015 // Volume 86 // Issue 3

Dangerous?

The controversy over pit bulls. **page 7**

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

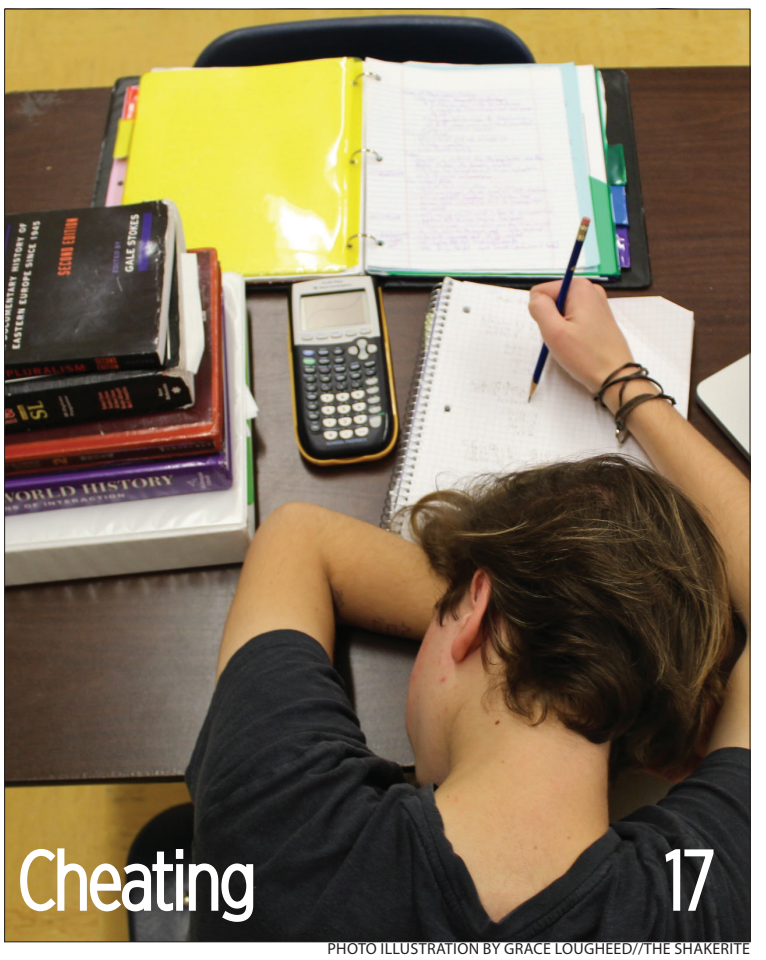

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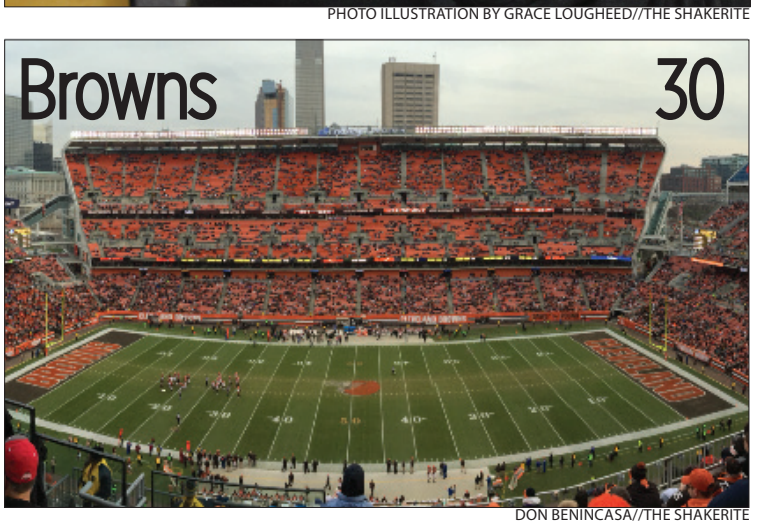
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE LOUGHEED//THE SHAKERITE



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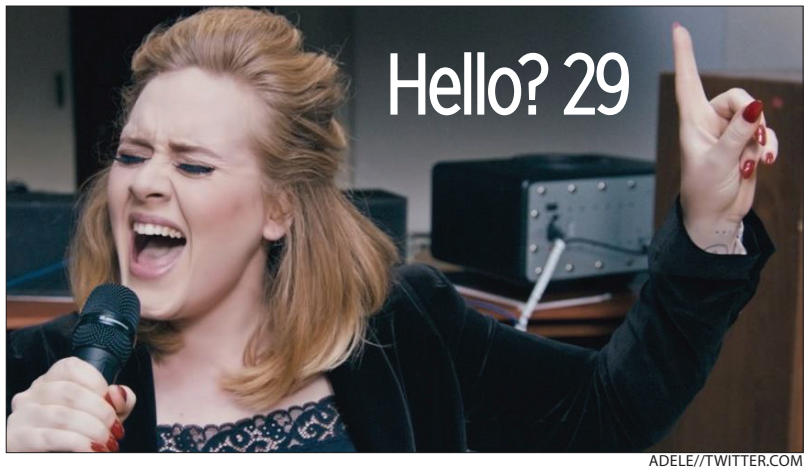

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Dump Trump

ELLA SHLONSKY PRINT EDITOR IN CHIEF
ALEXANDRA HARRIS WEB EDITOR IN CHIEF

The joke isn't funny anymore.

It was fun to crack jokes about his hair, and even to watch him insult his opponents at the first debate.

It stopped being fun when he threatened to ban Muslims from entering our country.

Donald Trump is running his campaign like a student council election gone wrong. In high school, we joke about our future class representatives during elections because we know, deep down, that there is nothing really at stake. Sure, a poor representative may not raise as much money as we wanted for the class, and our T-shirts may lack style.

Editors' Note

However, nothing will deeply affect our lives if we are governed by a poor class council. This is not a knock on our high school's Student Council in any way. Rather, the opposite. We wish America could exhibit the maturity that many high school students use when choosing someone qualified for the job, instead of just the class clown.

The first GOP debate drew 24 million viewers Aug. 6, while only 15.3 million tuned in to view the first Democratic debate Oct. 13. While the numbers of registered Democrats and Republicans are roughly equal, the GOP debate drew nearly 10 million more viewers. This disparity was partially due to Trump.

The majority of viewers did not turn on their TVs to hear Trump's riveting plans for the country, but rather to listen to him put his foot in his mouth and insult the other candidates (and moderators).

While there are some who are genuinely voting for Trump because they agree with his plans to "make America great again," the majority just want a good laugh. Some will go as far as voting for Trump in the primaries just to keep him around for comic relief.

If you fall into this category, you should be ashamed of yourself. Politics are not a reality TV show, and our political system is not one to be taken lightly.

Forget that we have fought wars for our freedom. Forget that people died for our independence and to give every American the right to vote. Forget that today people around the world die for the opportunity to participate in a free and fair election.

Can you forget all of that? Can you disregard the generations of effort and sacrifice that have given us the freedom and suffrage we have today? Trump is making a mockery of presidential elections. He has no problem voicing crass remarks on Twitter and live TV alike. Recently, his campaign released a statement detailing his plans to bar all Muslims from entering the United States "until our country's representatives can figure out what's going on."

This is how he plans to make America great again? Barring entire groups of our population from entering our country? This is one idea to which Democrats and Republicans object equally.

In fact, since the statement, Trump has been on the outs with the Republican Party, even the new Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan. However, even this does not seem to deter him.

"A new poll indicates that 68 percent of my supporters would vote for me if I departed the GOP & ran as an independent," Trump tweeted.

He's probably right. Trump could assert that the world will end tomorrow, and his loyal band of followers would rush to construct doomsday shelters.

Their infatuation with Trump's campaign is disconcerting.

However, the main problem isn't just Trump himself. His presence has become an outlet for radical Americans to express their anger with our country's issues -- such as terrorist attacks and police shootings -- and Trump is only fueling the flames of an outraged population that is ready to boil over.

Recently, he said he would mandate the death penalty for anyone who kills a police officer, a clear effort to appeal to those who believe police have been unfairly criticized for shooting unarmed African-Americans. During a campaign stop Nov. 21 in Birmingham, Al., Trump demanded that Mercutio Southall Jr., a black rights activist, be removed from the venue after he shouted "Black lives matter!" Some of Trumps' supporters even assaulted Southall and video footage shows them pushing him down and kicking him.

In response to Southall's outburst, Trump said, "Maybe he should have been roughed up. It was disgusting what he was doing. . . This was a very obnoxious guy, a troublemaker, looking to make trouble."

Southall is not an "obnoxious guy"

-- Trump is. Trump is the troublemaker. This is unacceptable behavior, especially for someone in the running for president of the United States.

This is about more than politics.

This is not about whether you call yourself a Democrat or a Republican. This is not about tax plans, reproductive rights or gun control. This is about something much bigger than partisan fighting and splitting factions. It doesn't matter where you stand politically, there is something that requires recognition here.

We, as Americans, retain a tremendous power: the right to vote. Every one of our choices -- political and otherwise -- has more impact than we think.

It's one thing to genuinely believe that Donald Trump is the right president for our country. It's another to belittle our rights by supporting his buffoonery. You won't be laughing when Trump is riding around on Air Force One, embarrassing and endangering us around the world.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
Looks like @tedcruz is getting ready to attack. I am leading by so much he must. I hope so, he will fall like all others. Will be easy!
12/11/15, 7:49 AM
1,833 RETWEETS 4,945 LIKES
Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
Our VISA system is broken, like so much else in our country. We better get it fixed really fast. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!
12/10/15, 7:00 AM
3,214 RETWEETS 8,517 LIKES
Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
Well, Obama refused to say (he just can't say it), that we are at WAR with RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISTS.
12/6/15, 8:45 PM
6,874 RETWEETS 14.1K LIKES
Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
Obama said in his speech that Muslims are our sports heroes. What sport is he talking about, and who? Is Obama profiling?
12/7/15, 12:50 AM
4,938 RETWEETS 9,131 LIKES

While Donald Trump believes insulting candidates, moderators and religions is the key to "Make America great again," he is running a dangerous campaign that has everyone from President Obama and key figures in his own party, such as Speaker Paul Ryan, challenging his legitimacy.

We as Americans retain a tremendous power: the right to vote. Every one of our choices-- political and otherwise-- has more impact than we think.

Computer Science Classes Could Return to Shaker

Adding AP courses, encouraging minority, female enrollment are district goals as jobs proliferate

GRACE LOUGHEED CAMPUS AND CITY EDITOR

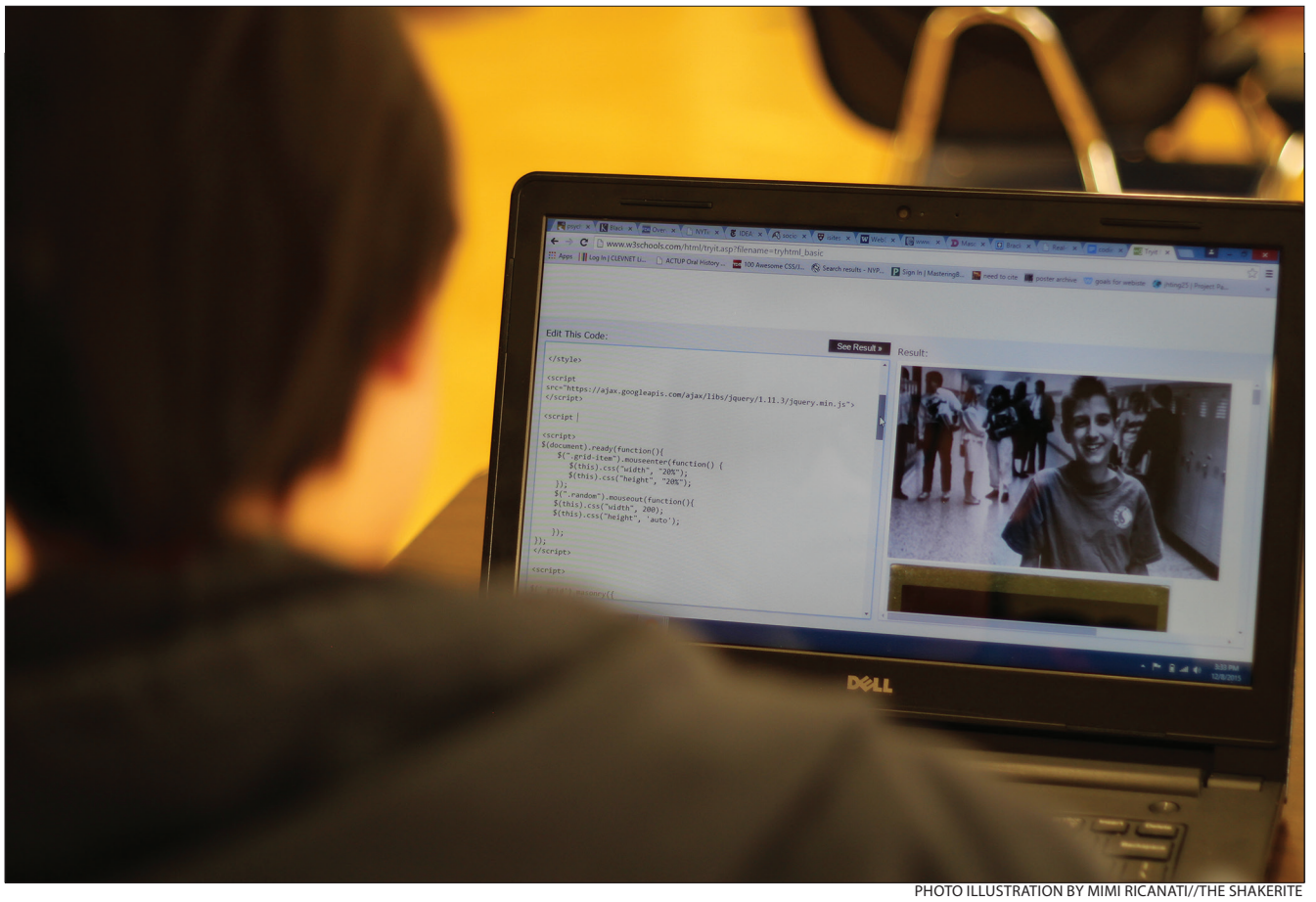


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MIMI RICANATI//THE SHAKERITE

Sophomore Jocelyn Ting works on coding her National History Day website. Ting has been independently learning computer science for three years.

The last time a student could study computer science at Shaker Heights High School was in 2007.

2016 may be the year this increasingly important course is revived.

In an interview last April, former Principal Michael Griffith explained that the course's absence was due to "ebbs and flows of interest and commitment to it over the years."

"We had it for a long time all the way through AP for coding courses, focused more on C++ and Pascal and other languages of that time.

"But then the interested students didn't sign up for Java or C++, so the courses kind of went away, and the teacher who was the spearhead for that retired," Griffith said.

The district is now looking to tap a renewed interest in this subject.

At the Nov. 9 faculty meeting, Interim Principal James Reed shared an article titled, "Still No African-Americans Taking the AP Computer Science Exam in Nine States."

By sharing the article, Reed wanted to emphasize the lack of representation of minorities and females in computer science courses.

"I was particularly interested in the minority part of it because we're always looking for ways to break barriers and...eliminate an opportunity gap," Reed said. "For me, I thought it was an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. It would help us bridge our achievement gap, and it's a course that is the way to the future for students in high school today."

Reed also said that he was aware of interest that already existed in the course. "One of the first conversations I had with a parent back in July when I came here was about why we don't offer a computer course," he said.

In the article Reed shared, The College Board released detailed demographic data from the 2015 AP Exams. The data revealed that in nine states, no African Americans took the AP Computer Science Exam, and in 10 states, fewer than 10 females took the AP Computer Science Exam.

Ebony Johnson began working as a data scientist at the Cleveland-based IBM company Explorys in 2011. She said she experienced underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering and medical fields firsthand.

"When I first came to Explorys, it may have been five women here and two women in the computer science profession. One of them, beside myself, was an African American. This was out of 50 people," Johnson said. "That statistic is accurate and it reigns through what I've seen [in my career]. I think now the statistic is growing because females have been exposed to STEM programs. Hopefully we'll see that number rise, but I think it's just getting females exposed to that as a profession."

Katie Ek, a data scientist at Explorys, explained how being a female in a computer science field can be advantageous. "It really does help when you're looking for a job because your resume stands out a little bit."

Ek believes that being female in a computer science field stands out on a social basis more than a professional one. "People don't really expect me to be a data scientist," she said.

In the absence of computer courses, students interested in computer science have found ways to learn independently.

"I have been coding for a little over two years now. I was first introduced to it by my dad and later began learning different computer languages on my own," senior Liyang Feng said. "I learned by reading books, taking online courses, through YouTube tutorials and online resources.

Feng said he also collaborated with others. "I know a couple of people in this school who also do this, and I started an app development business with my friends," he said.

Senior Braden Meyerhoefer had similar experiences. "I've always loved computers and technology, so a couple years ago I started teaching myself some programming after building my own computer," he said.

"I believe that Shaker is on the cutting edge of a lot of different academic offerings for its students and [Computer Science] is an appropriate thing for us to offer."

JAMES REED III

Meyerhoefer plans to continue his pursuit of computer science into college. "Once I decided that computer science would probably be my major, my counselor and some other people in the field that I talked to said it would be good for me to get some experience before going to college," he said. "I continued learning on my own using the Internet and did a cyber security camp at Champlain College."

Sophomore Jocelyn Ting found learning independently through on online computer science education company was an unsatisfactory opinion. "I've been trying to learn independently over about three years using Code Academy with little success, since I only go on when I have lots of free time," she said.

Students shared the importance of the course and how it may have benefited them if it had been offered during their time at the high school.

"I think the school should definitely start a computer science course and I would have taken it had they offered one when I started high school," Meyerhoefer said. "Computer science is an important field in today's world, and introducing it at the high school level would expose students to it before they get to college."

Feng agreed. "I would totally take a computer science class if it was offered at Shaker. It would help me a lot with learning it if I had a instructor to help me when I am stuck," he said.

"I think computer science is very important because it is all around us in this technological world we live in today. Computers help us accomplish so much, and it wouldn't hurt to learn how they work."

Ting said there is enough interest to justify offering the course next year.

"I know tons of people who share an interest in this. Even just in my grade there would definitely be enough people to fill one or two classes," said Ting. "If there was a Computer Science course at SHHS, it would be the most amazing thing. It's so important, and once you know one language it is pretty easy to learn others."

Evelyn Ting ('13), Jocelyn's older sister, is a computer science major at Amherst College. "Knowing computer science is like knowing how to write," she said.

"I've personally allowed so many social initiatives to happen on campus by coding for them," she added.

According to Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Terri Breeden, student interest needs to be assessed before the course is presented to the Board of Education in January, which approves what classes can be added or removed for the 2016-2017 school year.

"They are planning," Breeden said. "You can put anything in the course book, but if students don't sign up for it, we don't offer it."

At a Nov, 30 PTO meeting, Superintendent Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings said, "AP Computer Science is what the department is looking at right now, and since we're talking about AP Computer Science, IB also offers computer science. We're having discussions right now about adding the AP and IB courses. I still stand behind the fact that AP and IB can live under one roof and I think that is the uniqueness about Shaker Heights."

International Baccalaureate offers computer science as both a Standard and Higher Level course. The curriculum features programming and computational thinking.

"To the administration I would say that a computer science course would benefit many students in the high school as it promotes logical thinking skills, and a course in this field would give students an opportunity to explore new fields of study," Feng said.

Reed explained what the process of creating the course looks like. "There are some prerequisite courses that teachers have to take in order to give those AP offerings. We're in the process of doing that, then we'll go to the board, the district level."

The teaching positions for the courses are looking to be filled by existing staff. A potential candidate is current science teacher James Schmidt.

Schmidt explained in an interview that there would be a course offered to tenth graders that focuses on computer applications. The AP course would focus on programming with Java.

"If you are interested in computers, engineering as a career I think having that exposure, whether or not you take the [AP] credit, can definitely give you a leg up. Having the ability to take a class and show a college you have experience in it gives you a competitive edge."

Statistics show that jobs in the computer science field are continuously greater in number than computer science graduates.

According to statistics from code.org, there are currently 21,026 open computing jobs in Ohio (3.6 times the state average demand rate) and 1,079 computer science graduates. Ohio is one of the 27 states where Computer Science counts as math or science credit.

"Initially, when I began my career, computer science was a new thing. But now, computer science is used in almost every job that's out there," Johnson said. "The market for computer science is plentiful and it's such a shortage in these types of roles that it's almost scary."

Ek, who graduated with a degree in computer information systems from John Carroll University, said, "When I was looking for a job out of school, I had three opportunities that I had to chose from and I know that's pretty rare."

According to a Computer Science Education fact sheet released by The White House, "By 2020, more than 50 percent of Science Technology Engineering Mathematics jobs are projected to be in computer science-related fields. If current trends continue, 1.4 million computer science-related jobs will be available over the next ten years, but only 400,000 computer science graduates will be added with the skills to apply for those jobs."

Johnson explained how students can use a two year degree in computer science to find a job. "Community colleges have programs where high schoolers can get a two year degree upon completion, and that two year degree could definitely be in computer science and allow for them to have a great career at the age of 20. It would place them in a salary range where they could continue growing."

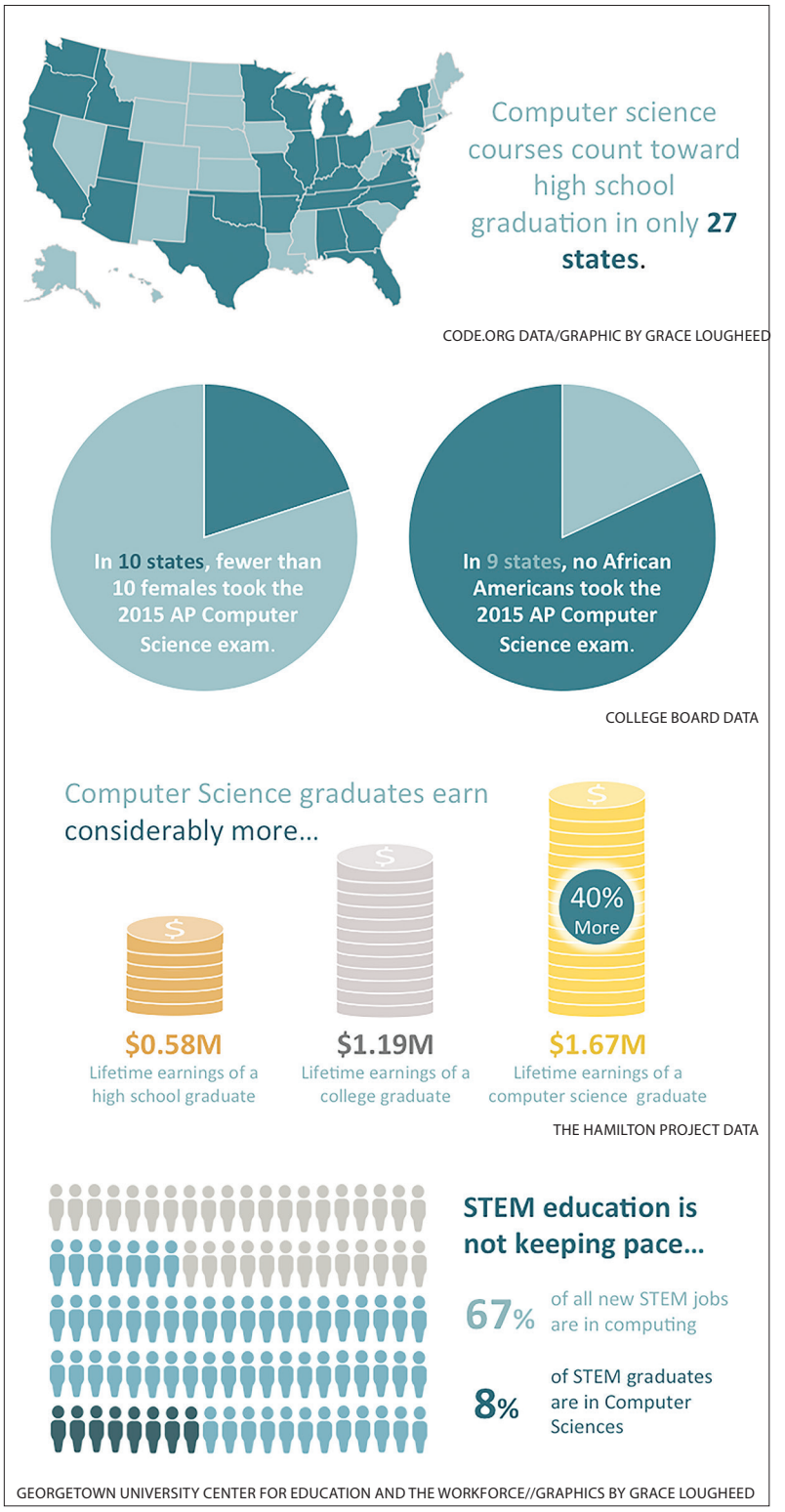
Initiatives to attract more students to computer science have made waves in that field in recent years.

Last year, Shaker students participated in the Hour of Code. Code.org, a nonprofit, created this introductory computer science activity to give students all over the world the opportunity to learn coding basics. The organization hopes to spark an interest in students and encourage them to discover coding on a deeper level after completing the hour-long activity.

Reed said, "I believe that Shaker is on the cutting edge of a lot of different academic offerings for its students and this is an appropriate thing for us to offer. That's the new wave of jobs in the future and there's no reason why Shaker should not be involved."

"The internet and computers probably aren't going away any time soon. The usage-

Computer Science Education Statistics Reveal Need for Classes in Shaker


Computer science courses count toward high school graduation in only 27 states.
CODE.ORG DATA/GRAPHIC BY GRACE LOUGHEED
In 10 states, fewer than 10 females took the 2015 AP Computer Science exam.
In 9 states, no African Americans took the 2015 AP Computer Science exam.
COLLEGE BOARD DATA
Computer Science graduates earn considerably more...
$0.58M
Lifetime earnings of a high school graduate
$1.19M
Lifetime earnings of a college graduate
40% More
$1.67M
Lifetime earnings of a computer science graduate
THE HAMILTON PROJECT DATA
STEM education is not keeping pace...
67% of all new STEM jobs are in computing
8% of STEM graduates are in Computer Sciences
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE//GRAPHICS BY GRACE LOUGHEED

"The market for computer science is plentiful and it's such a shortage in these types of roles that it's almost scary."
EBONY JOHNSON

of them in everyday life and businesses is going to continue to grow as it has," Ek said. "I think it's extremely important to get students involved in computer science a lot earlier."

Johnson said, "Computer science is a major game changer for our future. We really need to tap into that profession. If we want to see women, if we want to see our future children have a solid career, computer science is the way to go. There are so many opportunities and gainful insight that you will get from computer science, it's just amazing. I really wish it was the big thing in high school."

TEACHERS TEST LIMITS OF STUDENT STRESS

Despite schedule, students can take two or more tests a day

ZACHARY NOSANCHUK LIFESTYLE EDITOR
ABIGAIL ARONOFF JOURNALISM I REPORTER

MIMI RICANATI//THE SHAKERITE

Sophomore Advanced Placement United States History students Caitlin Culina and Gautam Apte take a quiz Dec. 8. Students who take classes such as these can confront several tests or quizzes on the same day despite the high school's testing schedule policy.

Bringing up the word *testing* incites stress and fear among students in any high school in America.

Although most negatvie reactions can be attributed to the rise in annual standardized, high-stakes testing, some Shaker students are struggling to manage home-grown tests when given on the same day.

"It's really stressful to have more than one test in one day because it forces you to prioritize subjects," said senior Amani Hill. "You have to choose which class to study for the most, and that can lead to you feeling overly prepared for one test and underprepared for another."

The practice raises questions about Shaker's test policy and why some teachers do not follow it.

"Every department has two test days and one flex night. There should never be more than three tests on a single day," English Department Chairwoman Elaine Mason said.

Biology teacher Nathaniel Hsu said that the policy can never be perfect because there are too many subjects and too few days.

"Each subject is assigned two days of the week to give tests," Hsu said. "With at least four core subjects, it's going to be difficult to give each subject its own test day separate from any other course without restricting the curriculum and disrupting learning."

Hill said that there are many holes in the policy because of rescheduling.

"Most of my teachers enforce a subject test day, or stick to two days at the most and alternate which day to test on," Hill said. "However, that doesn't mean that tests that get pushed back don't end up scheduled on days that are not their usual test day."

Sophomore Emma Ponitz said the policy is not in effect. "It was never enforced," she said. "Teachers say that they will enforce it on the syllabus, but they don't. They just do what's convenient for their class."

Math teacher Eric Babcock thinks that the testing policy is very important for students' balance, even if it is difficult to follow sometimes.

"It's hard sometimes when you are ending the unit because you want to give a test right after you finish a chapter. But if we end the chapter on Friday, it's not helpful to wait until Wednesday to give the test," Babcock said.

However, this policy only applies to tests in single classes for core subjects. Students who take more than one class in the same subject may still endure class tests on the same day.

"It's really stressful to have more than one test in one day because it forces you to prioritize subjects."

AMANI HILL

"I have Physics and Environmental Systems and Societies this year, so on Fridays I usually have tests in both classes," Hill said.

Hsu believes that several tests on one day poses a realistic challenge.

"It isn't bad for a student to have multiple tests on one day, but it is challenging," he said. "However, I always note that during final exams, you are given two gigantic tests in one day, and in college, there is nothing stopping a student from potentially having four tests in one day."

Sophomore Jude Hinze-Gaines believes that the issue is common.

"The policy is not always enforced, which is understandable, but I know many people who have had three or more tests in one day," he said.

Mason believes that the policy isn't truly enforced among teachers.

"It's been in place a while, but it's suggested, brought to people's attention, reminded to teachers, but I don't think anyone has been told, 'Don't do a test on this day,' " she said.

Junior Brian Johnson said that the test policy can be easily avoided.

"When we have days off of school during the week, teachers will give a test on a day, and some teachers give quizzes on any day of the week because they aren't technically tests," he said.

Hill said taking two or more tests on the same day exhausts already tired students. "Knowing that you wasted time studying for an easier test than for a harder one is really frustrating. That said, just having to take more than one test is stressful because tests are draining, especially when so many of us students already barely get any sleep as it is."

Latin teacher Nora Murphy said that teachers don't always follow the test policy. "I think some teachers violate that by

scheduling tests frequently on days that are not their test days,"she said.

Because the policy seems more like a suggestion, students are pessimistic about its merits.

"It's pointless because it is not enforced," said Ponitz, "and I think the teachers just ignore it."

Hsu believes that there is no perfect policy. Taking more than one test a day is an unavoidable.

For example, sophomores often take Advanced Placement United States History and Honors Biology tests on the same day, but if one test were to be rescheduled for another day, it could then conflict with two other subject tests.

But, even if imperfect, the testing schedule helps students.

"If we put ourselves in the students' shoes, we can see how students take advantage of flex nights and test days," Mason said. "All of this is in the best interest of students."

"It's the best policy that can be put in place that I can think of to maintain a relatively equal balance of tests on each day," Hinze-Gaines said.

"I would personally like it to be enforced to be more consistent, or to be modified to be more effective," she said.

"I have had four big tests in one day before, and I'd prefer not to have that again in the future."

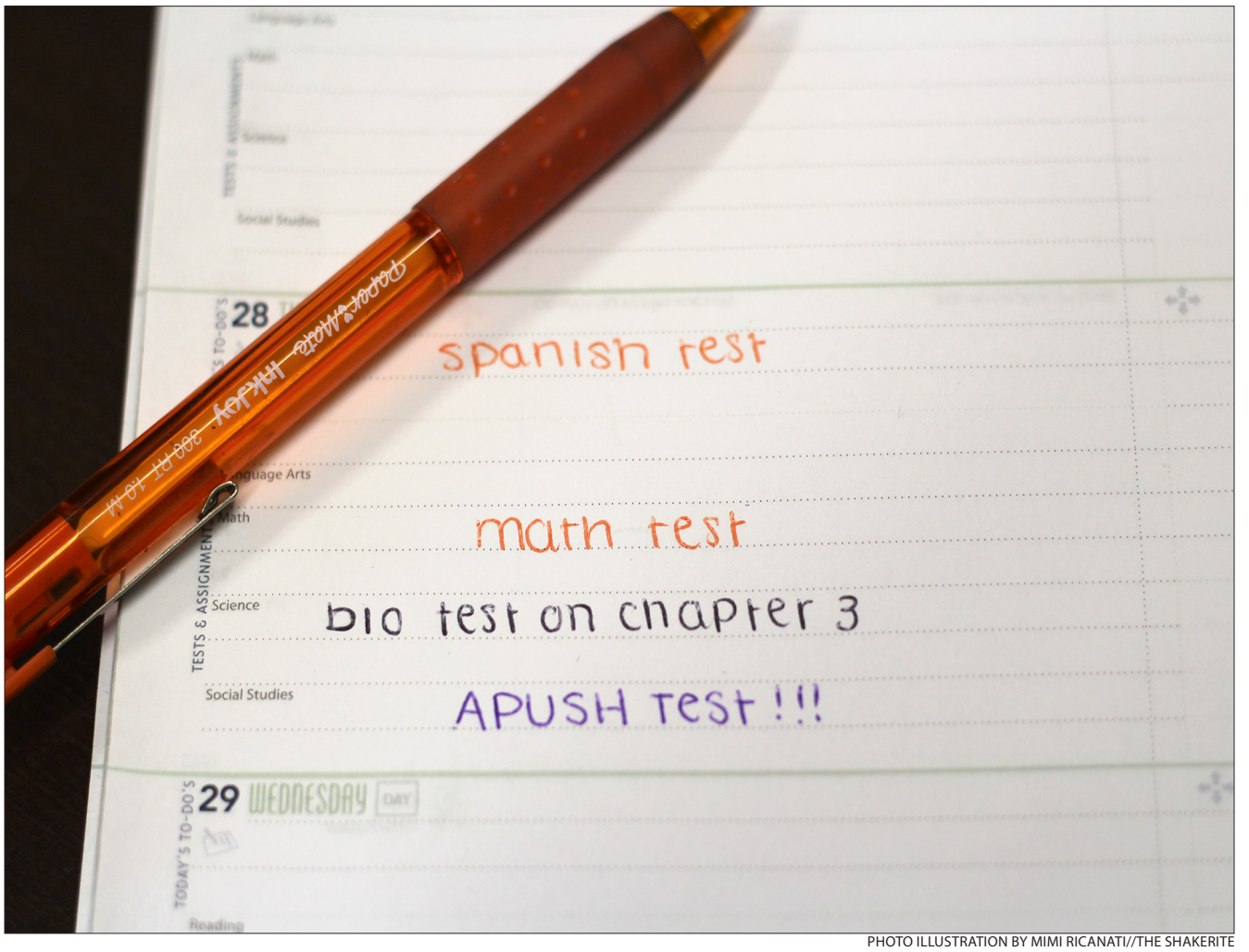


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MIMI RICANATI//THE SHAKERITE

Taking several tests on one day is a common for many high school students. Although policy restricts teachers to using only certain days of the week for tests, days off school for conferences, holidays or weather, for example, force teachers to test on an unassigned days or wait up to a week to test.

SHTA
Shaker Heights Teachers' Association
Professionals Dedicated to Excellence

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Lisa Smith walks her two dogs -- Emily, on the left, is a full pit bull, and Bruce Springsteen, on the right, who got into a car accident three years ago and lost one leg. "I was impressed by the amount of people who are responsible dog owners and pit bull owners and people who don't feed into what the media tells them to think about the dog called the pit bull," she said.

PITTING SHAKER V. PIT BULL OWNERS

YASMINE KAYALI AND AUDIE LORENZO CAMPUS AND CITY EDITORS

As Shaker Heights City Council prepares to vote on a proposed pit bull ban, owners defend their dogs' reputations as residents call for safety regulations. Council will vote Jan. 12, 2016.

Shaker's pit bulls may soon be a pet of the past.

Shaker Heights City Council held a meeting Nov. 6 to debate the proposed pit bull ban. The meeting was well attended and full of stories and statistics to support, or disapprove of, the dogs' residence in Shaker.

Shaker Heights Law Director Bill Gruber explained the ban:

City Council is going to vote on whether to ban new pit bulls and require existing pit bulls and other vicious dogs to be registered with the city, spayed, neutered, microchipped and vaccinated.

The drafted ban would require vicious dogs to be registered with the city.

"Right now we declare a dog vicious but we don't require a registration," said Gruber. "Now we will."

Police dogs, therapy dogs and service dogs would be exempt from the ban.

If the ban passes, pit bulls would join a list of other animals that the city bans.

"We have a number of animals that are banned in the city; wild undomesticated animals that are considered dangerous that are specifically listed in an ordinance," Gruber said.

Some of the most memorable speeches in support of the ban were the stories of pit bull attacks.

"One story that stood out to me was that of a granddaughter whose grandmother was killed by a pit bull without any provoking of the dog," junior Gus Mahoney who attended the meeting, said.

This story was told by another community member, Tequila Williams. Williams spoke on Nov. 6 about her grandmother's experience of a pit bull attack. "No one thinks about the people who are being harmed. No one has measures put in place to prevent someone from being mauled to death, bitten to death, where they are getting surgery for the rest of their lives trying to repair the damage that a dog bite has done to them," she said.

Williams' grandmother, Annie L. Williams, was killed by a pit bull last July on Pennington Road.

Williams was going to pick up two of her great-granddaughters when the dog escaped from a neighbor's yard and attacked her as she was getting out of her car.

The pit bull was shot by a neighbor, but it was too late to save Annie Williams' life.

"That was one of the sparks that led the mayor to look into it," Gruber said. "It was a pretty gruesome and horrible tragedy."

Residents had a lot to say during and after the meeting.

Shaker resident Lisa Smith, a pit bull owner, explained her stance. "I was impressed by the amount of people who are responsible dog owners and pit bull owners and people who don't feed into what the media tells them to think about the dog called the pit bull," she said.

Paul Ford, a Shaker Heights resident who was attacked by a pit bull and spoke at the meeting, does not believe the meeting's discussion showed both sides of the argument clearly. "It was not successful in getting a cross-sectional view of the community on this issue," Ford stated in an email.

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Toys, a 2-year-old pit bull mix and Cleveland City Kennel's longest resident, carries a tennis ball while on a walk with a volunteer.

"I thought the meeting showed there is a great number of people who own pit bulls and feel threatened by this measure," said Robb Forward, another resident who spoke at the meeting, in an interview.. "I also got the feeling as though the mayor and several of the council members have made up their minds regardless of people's opinions."

Mayor Earl Leiken stated why he believed the meeting was necessary. "The city administration made a recommendation to the Safety and Public Works Committee that there be a ban on pit bulls going forward," he said, "and in that process the safety and public work committee made a decision to approve the ban with the condition that people who currently had pit bulls would be able to keep their pit bulls, so that has been the recommendation that has now been taken to the city council."

If the ban passes, the law will be enforced by both the city's animal warden as well as the Shaker Heights Police Department.

"Labels are unjust, and we can't put things into categories. Labeling is wrong whether it's people or animals."

SANDRA SUMMERS

According to Gruber, the city would find out about new pit bulls entering the city through complaints.

"That complaint could come from another resident or citizen, or that complaint could come from one of our employees doing their work for the city," Gruber said.

If the city finds a pit bull adopted after the ban, the city will issue an order that the dog is not permitted in the city and that it has to be removed within a certain time period.

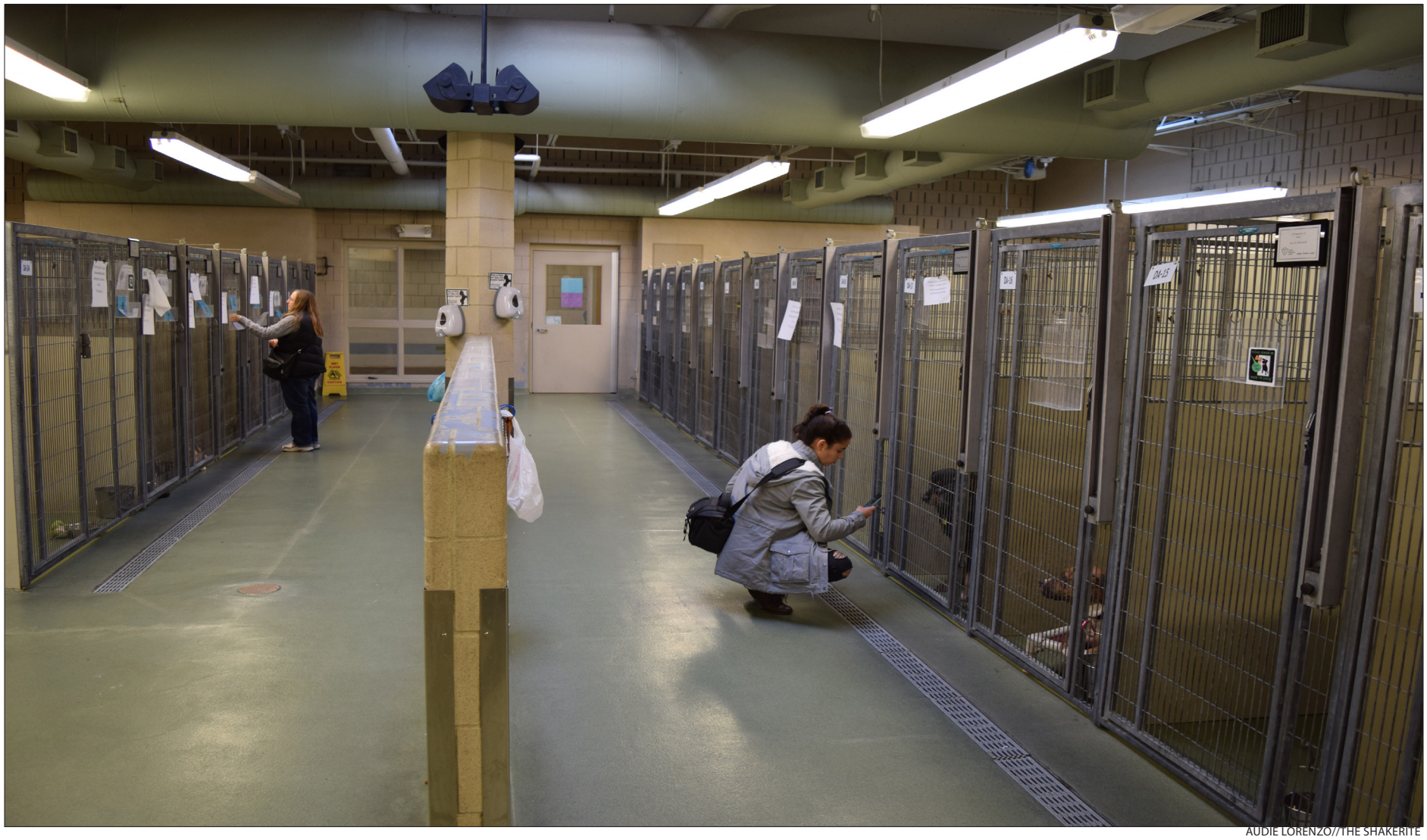
The owner would have a right to appeal the decission.

"They could say for some reason their dog was grandfathered, or that it was not a pit bull and that the city had mistaken it, or that it was under the Americans with Disability Act and that they had the right to keep that dog because it was a therapy or service dog," Gruber said.

The city would then decide whether to let the owner keep the dog.

If the appeal is not approved and the city decides the owner can not keep the dog, the city will have the owner remove it within 30 days.

During the meeting, community members shared their own pit bull experiences



AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

The Cleveland Animal Protective League is home to abandoned and surrendered dogs, including pit bulls. The dogs there Nov. 22 wait to be adopted in a sparse, caged facility in downtown Cleveland. The Cleveland APL's mission is to foster compassion and end animal suffering, according to its website.

in Shaker.

"I only became aware of this pit bull ban after I was attacked by a pit bull and experienced the dog's persistence in the attack and the way it attacked with no physical or auditory warning. This experience of how the dog attacked matches the various media representations of the nature of other pit bull attacks," Ford said.

Community member Sandra Summers explained why she was moved to speak against the ban.

"I was a counselor for kids who made some poor choices and were labeled.

They were still good people. Labels are unjust, and we can't say all of anything is one way. We can't put things into categories. Labeling is wrong, whether it's people or animals, so I felt like I should speak up," she said.

According to the Ohio Department of Health, Cuyahoga County reported 721 dog bites, in 2014; Shaker Heights specifically reported 16.

With the ban still up in the air, community members have taken sides.

Amy Beilier, Director of PAWS, a nonprofit, private foster home rescue, said she opposes the ban.

"I stand against the ban because breed-specific legislation never works. When you zone in on one specific breed, you do a disservice to humanity because there are so many very well-behaved pit bulls," Beilier said. "There are very dangerous dogs of other breeds within our community. What you do is you pretty much prosecute and put the burden on the citizens who have done nothing wrong."

"No one thinks about the people who are being harmed. No one has measures put in place to prevent someone from being mauled to death."

TEQUILA WILLIAMS

"I disagree with the ban because I have two rescued pit bulls," Smith said.

"At one time I believed the media and I was afraid of the dog. Then I learned the other side of the story, and I realized that I needed to grow as a person and not listen to what other people told me."

Mahoney does not support a ban.

"But I do think that there should be some restrictions on how they're kept. There were some good points made against-breed specific legislation, and I thought that was interesting," he said.

Shaker sophomore Essence Reddick's pit bull, King, an All-American Red Nose, once bit her accidentally.

"I was feeding my dog and I put my arm in front of him and he wasn't paying attention when he was eating, because pit bulls eat fast, so he bit down on my arm," said Reddick.

Reddick said she has never seen signs of aggression from her dog and describes him as being "calm."

"After he bit me he laid under me because he knew he bit me," said Reddick. "I had an infection in my arm where he bit me."

Reddick was in the hospital for four days. However, she and her family kept King after the incident and have owned him for four years.

Veterinarian Dr. Alice Jeromin added her opinion on pit bulls being labeled as dangerous as a whole.

"I don't think any breed of dog is dangerous unless they give me reason to think so," she said.

"As a vet I've worked with all breeds of dogs and within those breeds, there are some that are more friendly than others. There are definitely shy dogs and more friendly dogs, just like in humans with different personalities."

Nineteen states have passed laws to prevent local governments from enacting breed-specific legislation such as Shaker's proposed law. Ohio is not one.

In Cuyahoga County, five cities -- Brook Park, Garfield Heights, Lakewood, Parma and Warrensville Heights -- have banned pit bulls.

Richmond Heights lifted its ban last summer.

Cleveland Animal Protection League worker Lisa Tarcy explained the organization's opinions on Shaker's proposal

"The Cleveland APL does not support breed-specific legislation because it's inef-

-fective, unenforceable, and doesn't protect public safety," she said. "If anything, it diverts local enforcement efforts away from protecting the community from truly dangerous dogs to trying to enforce a law that will mostly impact good dogs and good owners."

"If the ban passes, the APL would no longer be able adopt those dogs to Shaker Heights residents, which will make it harder to find them homes," Tarcy said.

Nate Calabrese, a senior, began a petition protesting the ban. The petition included information from the U.S. Department of Justice and major animal organizations, all opposing breed-specific bans.

"Bottom line is, the ban is a bad decision because it's based off the presumption that pit bulls are some inherently vicious, naturally evil dogs that exist to attack people," said Calabrese. "I don't think pitbulls are dangerous unless you neglect them. If you don't treat them properly, or neglect them or don't socialize them with pit bulls or other dogs or people, they can turn out nasty."

Opponents of the ban argue that pit bulls' behavior is reflective of their treatment.

"Shaker should make the owners responsible to train all dogs. My goal is hoping Shaker will put the responsibility on the owners, not the dog," Summers said.

"We believe there are individual dogs from any breed that can be a problem regardless of the owner, however, the vast majority of the time, aggressive behavior can be prevented in any dog by allowing the dog to live inside as a member of the family," said Tarcy. "Additionally, if owners comply with current licensing laws and do not let their dogs run loose in neighborhoods, which is also illegal in most places, the risk of being bitten by a strange dog would drop dramatically. Owners need to be held accountable for the acts of their dogs."

Mayor Leiken spoke at the meeting as well.

"We did have people injured by pit bulls or attacked by pit bulls who came to the meeting, but there were more people who spoke against it, and I just wanted them to understand that there are two sides to this and that there is another point of view, and I expressed that point of view," he said in a later interview.

"That's what's got my dad and a lot of people angry," Calabrese said of the mayor's words at the meeting. "I'm not really clear on this. His response is legal. It doesn't show that he's evil or out to get us. It just shows he wasn't listening to what we were saying."

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Floria, a 2-year-old pit bull mix ,goes for her daily walk outside of the Cleveland City Kennel, with kennel volunteer Shelbi Walchanowicz. Dogs like Floria risk being banned from Shaker Heights, which would make it harder for the Cleveland APL and the kennel to find adoptive homes for the animals.

Before City Council votes, community members share their hopes for Shaker's pit bulls. "I would not support the city banning pitbulls because I think people think pit bulls are mean dogs, but if you get to know them they are actually very nice," said Reddick. "My dog bit me by accident."

"My hope is that City Council takes a look at other municipalities, for instance Cleveland," said Beilier. "Cleveland has enacted a dangerous dog ordinance which covers all breeds. This way they are not targeting one specific breed. In my belief, what Shaker needs to do is they need to make sure all the ordinances that they already have are taken care of."

Ford described a different desire among residents. "I don't want this to be a community with a reputation that you need to carry pepper spray or stun guns when you jog in the neighborhood," he said. "We need to both ban animals who have physical attributes that make them particularly deadly and we need to change the culture among pet owners to take responsibility to physically restrain their animals in public."

"Bottom line is, that the ban is a bad decision because it's based off the presumption that pit bulls are some inherently vicious naturally evil dogs that exist to attack people."

NATE CALABRESE

Connie Rischendollar, a volunteer at Cleveland City Kennel, said individual pit bulls suffer from generalizations. "I got introduced to pit bulls in November of 2014, and it changed my life," she said. "They are the sweetest, most loyal and affectionate dogs. Because they are looked at as a breed as a whole and not individual dogs, they are wrongly thought of as something they are not."

The next council meeting where community members are invited to speak on the topic is Dec. 21. City Council will vote on the ban Jan. 12. Both meetings start at 6:30 p.m.

PITBULLS THROUGH THE YEARS

1585: Pit bulls originated in England from breeding Olde English Bulldogs and Old English Terriers together.

1835: The sport bull baiting, putting pit bulls in an arena with bulls, was banned when the British.government created the Cruelty to Animals Act.

1870: Pit bulls began to come to America with immigrants.

1994: The San Francisco Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals renamed pit bulls to "St. Francis Terriers."

2004: The New York City Center for Animal Care and Control tried to relabel pit bulls as "New Yorkies."

Hearts Over Parts

Gender identities are evolving, but people are still just people

EMILY MONTENEGRO OPINION EDITOR

MARGI WEISS//THE SHAKERITE

I was born a biological girl, but that's not what matters. What matters is that I feel, wholeheartedly, like I am a girl. I am completely at home in my skin, and I have never hesitated barging into the girls' bathroom, nor have I had to consider which locker room to use. I have never wondered if my presence in either facility has made other occupants uncomfortable, because I'm a girl, and they're girls, and we're all girls -- what could possibly be the problem?

I have also never had to consider the gender of the girl changing with me in the locker room, or the one in the stall next to me. I assume we're all thinking the same thing if we all chose to use the girls' facilities: We're all girls. That doesn't have to mean we're anatomically identical, but how much does that matter? She's comfortable and I'm comfortable, because she is a girl and I am a girl -- again, I can't see a problem.

Texas saw a problem before it even arose. On Nov. 3 of this year, Houston voters defeated the proposed Houston Equal Rights Ordinance. The bill would have banned discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, which was not previously provided for under federal laws. Specifically, it promised to ban discrimination from "city employment, city services, city contracting practices, housing, public accommodations, and private employment." In layman's terms, anyone who felt like a girl could use female facilities, and the same for males. To me, it sounds like common sense. Sixty percent of Houston voters cannot say the same.

Campaigns against the ordinance dubbed it the "Sexual Predator Protection Act." The fear is that loosening the strict gender facilities, will give men an excuse to enter the women's facilities. There are several flaws in this theory.

Firstly, not much is stopping a man from tossing on a temporary disguise and waltzing into the ladies' room without any transgender-welcoming laws in place -- except for, of course, the fact that it's a criminal offense. Not to mention sexual assault of any kind is also a criminal offense, no matter the circumstances.

Secondly, this theory makes the transgender population appear to be a criminal community, which is just wrong. Transgender people are people. They have the same choice to be a criminal as any human being has, but -- fortunately -- most of the world's population decides to peacefully enter a restroom, go about their business and exit. There isn't much more to it.

That doesn't have to mean we're anatomically identical, but does that matter?

In school especially, there is no time for any monkey business to occur in bathrooms. Students are forbidden from leaving their classrooms in the first and last five minutes of class. They can't miss their education during that crucial half hour in between, but the four minutes allotted for going to and from classes is hardly enough time to hustle through the hallways, let alone take a potty break.

The ugly truth is that most of the time, students who want to learn have to burst into the bathroom, quickly get their job done and hurry out. There is not enough time for anything inappropriate to occur.

The locker rooms might be a slightly different story. Just two years ago, a male Shaker Heights High School student sexually assaulted a female student in the locker room.

In fact, from 2008 to 2013 there were fou;r reported sexual assault cases within the high school. One offered no information on the victim or assailant, but the remaining three had nothing to do with accommodating transgender students.

Allowing people to use restrooms that align with their gender identity rather than their biological sex doesn't mean incidents of rape will increase. Transgender people aren't the problem when it comes to sexual assault. The ideology behind the assaults is.

According Ohio law, Shaker Heights City Schools are legally obligated to allow transgender students to use whichever facilities they choose. This makes sense, because it's the school's responsibility to make their students feel comfortable and safe in their learning environments.

Houston voters had the opportunity to make their transgender population feel welcomed and safe, but ultimately turned it down.

There is another argument against the "open door policy," so to speak. Some people feel there is a risk of their innocent daughter seeing male genitalia if a transgender woman used the same restroom as the girl.

The solution to this problem is as simple as two words: bathroom stalls. Unlike boys and men, who must do some of their restroom business in full view of other boys and men, girls and women are spared the display required by urinals.

So if transgender people aren't rapists -- because most people aren't rapists -- and if the public's tender eyes won't bleed when exposed to the opposite sex's genitalia, then problem solved.

Transgender people are people, and all people should be able to change clothes or use the toilet peacefully and safely.

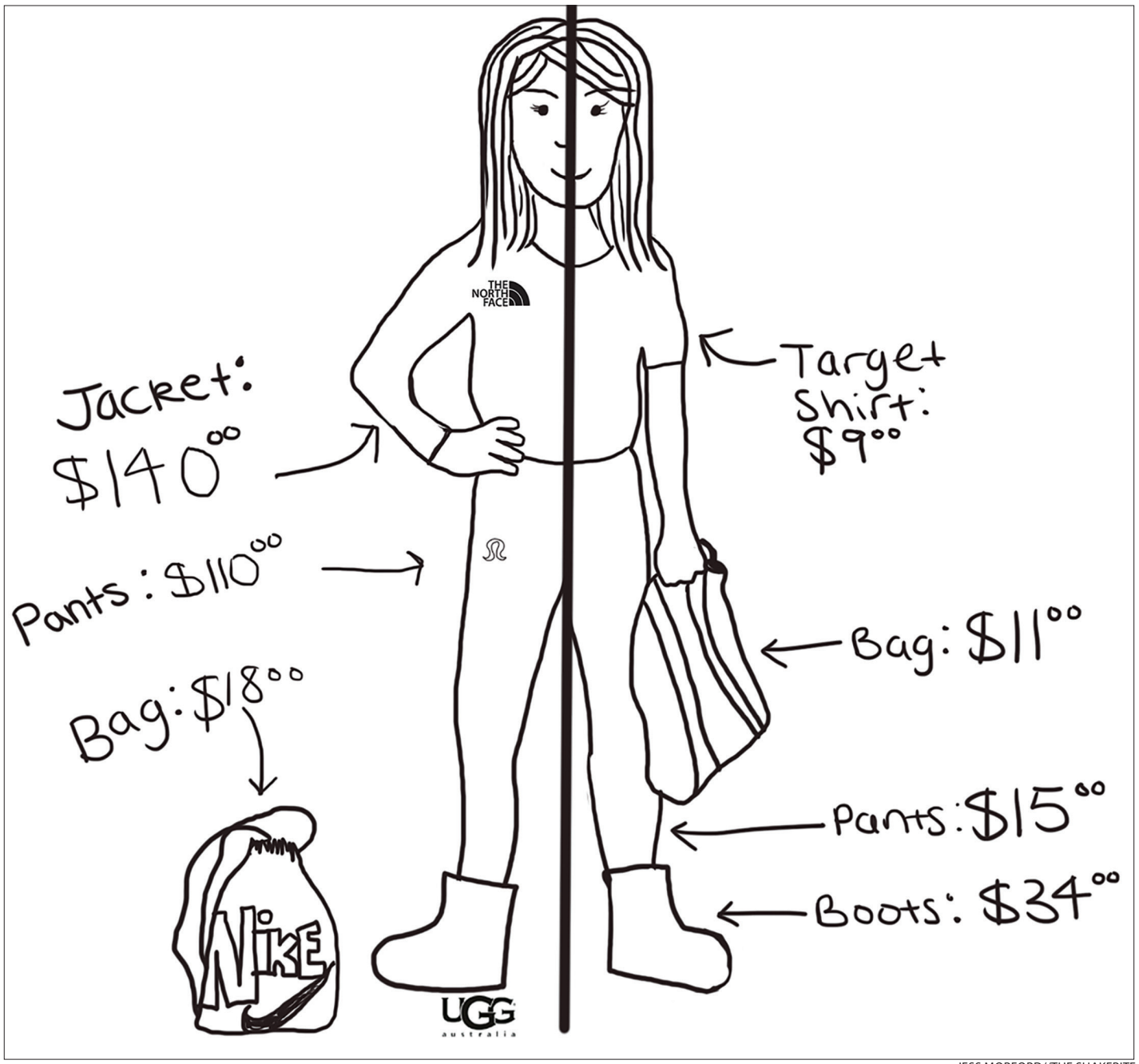
It really is that simple.

Dec. 17, 2015
The Shakerite

Don’t Label Me, Except by My Clothes

Price tags and popular brands determine teenagers’ identities

LILY ROTH OPINION EDITOR



JESS MORFORD//THE SHAKERITE

There was a time when childhood revolved around vivid colored pencils and magical books. To marketers, young children were not a primary focus. Businesses have always labeled teens as the “consumers” and “spenders,” and our generation is finally old enough to take our place in this category. But now, instead of selling fluffy pillows and model cars, marketers focus on one thing -- clothes.

In high school, to some, what we wear is who we are. Brands frame our identity. It may seem stupid -- most teens think what they wear doesn’t define who they really are. Well, sorry to ruin your image of teenagers in America, but status often revolves around clothing, whether you realize it or not.

Before clothing was culture and T-shirts were worshipped, teens would save up for a football or bicycle, or even a college education. Today, people work to spend. Babysitting money and waiters’ tips could easily be going toward a new pair of Converse high tops or graphic sweatshirt to add to their pile of twenty.

A BusinessInsider.com report states that almost 30 percent of teens’ money is spent on clothing, whereas the average wage earning adult spends about 2.7 percent of earnings on clothing. That’s insane.

A survey regarding teen consumer spending habits says clothing is the number one purchased item among teens, and the annual amount of money families spend on apparel amounts to $157.6 billion.

It’s one thing for families and individuals to spend all their money on clothes, but it’s another when the stores they are buying from are extremely expensive. ogically, it doesn’t make sense to buy clothing from a popular brand for more money, when similar looking clothes are available in other stores at a cheaper price.

So why do we buy expensive clothes when we can get them cheaper? Self identity. Certain brands try to create an image of the ideal person that should wear their clothing. For example, J Crew represents the preppy tribe of teens, while Urban Outfitters represents the trendy, bohemian group. Abercrombie reminds you of a skinny and popular 13-year-old girl. Nike fits the stylish yet athletic niche that America embodies. Billabong is all about surf culture. People buy certain brands because what you wear represents who you are, even though it shouldn’t.

Some believe that private school students have different opinions about brands, but an interview with a sophomore from Laurel School shows that she feels just the same as self-aware teens in Shaker. “It makes you feel good about yourself to have things that are popular,” said Elena Householder, a sophomore at Laurel.

“A new piece of research confirms that it is not the design itself that counts, but the label.”

THE ECONOMIST

An informal poll shows that out of 20 students, 16 chose Urban Outfitters and lululemon as their favorite places to shop. Asked what teen stores are most expensive, 19 students listed these same two stores among others.

Shoe culture is a different story. Shoes are a staple in American culture. Somehow, an irrelevant size 8 sneaker can determine social status. Nike remains the top clothing brand for all income levels. Top footwear brands for upper-income teens are ranked; Nike, Vans, Converse, Sperry Top-Sider, Timberlands and Steve Madden. Wearing designer clothing or shoes aligns you with an elite group: those who can afford it. Teenagers have grown to be able to tell cheap clothing from expensive clothing just by glancing at garments. When you wear a Vineyard Vines shirt, you appear wealthier and of higher social status than others. And who doesn’t want others to be insanely jealous of your clothes?

“I wish I could say, ‘Brands are pointless,’ and ‘I’m not going to let a label determine my status,’ but I can’t. They do,” Householder said. Junior Shaniya Weaver explains that there’s a difference among races in terms of clothing. “Black culture is all about Jordans and what type of Nike’s guys wear, but I feel like white culture is focused less on shoes and more on spending money on preppy clothing,” she said.

There is also the pop-culture side of things. Celebrities influence their fans’ wardrobe just by walking down the street.

“If an artist you like is wearing a certain brand, you feel this obligation to be like them,” said Weaver.

The Economist published an article in which the author stated, “Designers of fancy apparel would like their customers to believe that wearing their creations lends an air of wealth, sophistication and high status. And it does—but not, perhaps, for the reason those designers might like to believe, namely their inherent creative genius. A new piece of research confirms that it is not the design itself that counts, but the label.” Brand name boosts status, and while teenagers so often wish that labels didn’t define them, unfortunately they’re wrong.

Putting the Testing Schedule to the Test

MIMI RICANATI//THE SHAKERITE

Unbalanced testing schedule is unavoidable, despite stressfull side effects and complaints

Even with specific testing days, students still feel overwhelmed.

Staying up until 3 a.m., getting a solid four hours of sleep and still feeling unprepared for school -- we've all been there.

What causes this phenomenon? Too much homework, procrastination, or too many extra curriculars? Yes, yes and yes, but let's add another point to the list; class testing on the same day.

'Rite Idea

Perhaps because of an unprecedented number of days off during November for parent-teacher conferences and professional development, students have increasingly faced the hardship of studying for more than one test a day. To some, it seems that teachers are ignoring their assigned test days and giving tests whenever it is convenient for them. The complaints are common throughout the student body: students believe that teachers do not follow the policy.

The high school's testing policy states that every department has two designated test days weekly. This means that there should never be three tests on a single day, but we've all experienced that before.

Does the problem lie in teachers' ignorance of test days, or in the administration's failure to fully enforce this rule? And what's the point of assigning specific test days if they are not enforced?

While it may be difficult for students to take more than one test in one day, we must get used to it. It's reality. Shaker has always been exceptional in preparing students for college, and this practice is doing just that.

Even though it may be difficult and frustrating now, this reality is helping to prepare us for what's to come. And teachers face dilemmas of their own.

Shaker gives ample days off each month for holidays, conference days, field trips, snow days and other interruptions, making it hard for teachers to follow the testing day schedule. (School has been closed for five days in each of the last two years for extreme cold). Teachers, already stressed by a lack of instructional time due to state-mandated testing, can't be expected to follow the testing schedule to the letter.

If a science test is scheduled for Friday, but students have that Friday off, teachers have no choice but to reschedule it for a later day or move the test up a day to Thursday.

Even with specific testing days, students still feel overwhelmed. Tenth graders who take AP Biology and AP US History soon realize that those classes share a testing day. Why would the administration schedule these classes for the same test day?

There is no perfect policy. If the school makes changes according to the AP Biology and APUSH issue, other tests would be in conflict. It is an unavoidable problem.

Students should recognize that this policy was created help them. Eliminating it would not be in our best interests.

Shaker's Survival of the Cheaters

Educational standards, college requirements demand too much from students

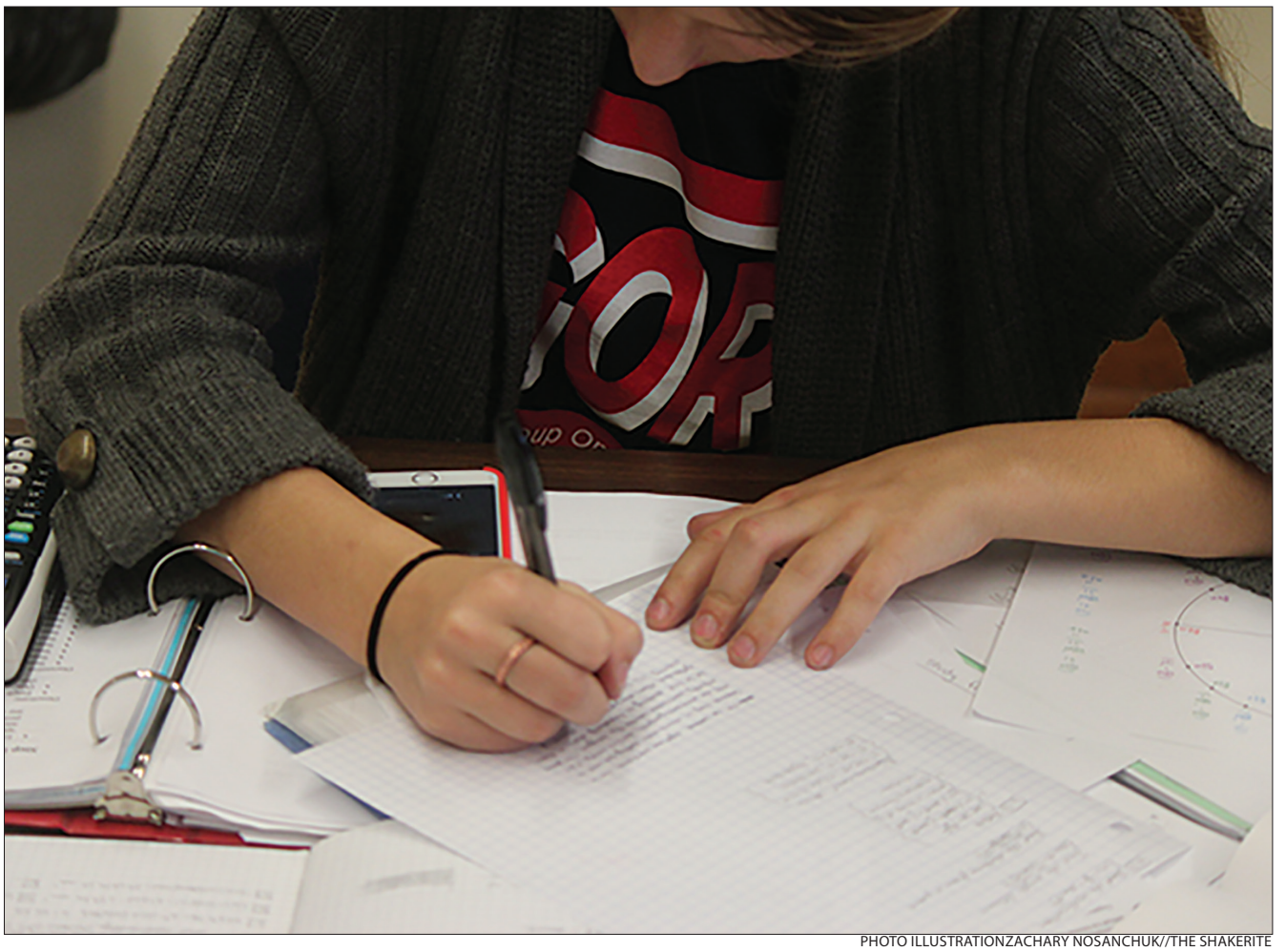


PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONZACHARY NOSANCHUK//THE SHAKERITE

Cheating, although considered dishonorable by teachers and administration, is a common last resort for students burdened with high-level classes and high-level aspirations. An informal Shakerite survey of such students revealed that 93 percent admitted to copying another student's homework in the past year.

It's three in the morning on a Wednesday. Frustrated tears threaten to spill from exhausted eyes onto Tuesday night's workload: an essay about this quarter's English book, math worksheets, foreign language practice, a lab report and 40 pages of history reading. Dozens of students experiencing the same unbearable stress share pictures of their completed assignments on group chats, attempting to lift some of the burden from their classmate's drooping shoulders. Nobody pauses to think about their teacher's frowning face as they hastily jot down their friends' answers, desperate to get a few hours of restless sleep before the big test in the morning and game in the afternoon. The worksheets can wait until lunch, and the Internet offers plenty of book summaries, so the essay can be pieced together during study hall. None of the completed assignments will be perfect, and they will most likely teach nothing, but hairs will be pulled and tears will be shed during the grueling process of getting them done.

'Rite Idea

Then it's three in the morning on a Thursday, and it's the same teeth-clenching process all over again. Students are told to put school first: memorize formulas before family time, solve equations before sports practice, read a required book before the popular new teen series. When it proves to be too much for the student -- and it always does -- they're told the workload isn't the problem: their time management skills are.

Now the student is stuck between a rock and a hard place. One option is dropping extracurriculars and devoting undivided time to schoolwork, putting in enormous effort to raise grades even half a letter to make teachers happy and college resumes even happier. Or, a student could stick with extracurriculars, the only relief from weekly educational torment, and cheat his or her way through the academic side of high school. Of course, neither are the ideal path. A comprehensive understanding of curriculum is what everyone claims to want for students, but is that really what anybody cares about anymore? Any miserable student struggling to study at three in the morning on a weekday might not be able to analyze "The Great Gatsby," but they can easily describe how neglected they feel. Conference periods offer extra help with concepts they don't understand, counselors offer tips to keep their sanity, but only fellow students understand the battlefield that high school has become.

Any miserable student struggling to study at three in the morning on a weekday might not be able to analyze The Great Gatsby, but they can easily describe how neglected they feel.

This is when cheating comes into play. When we think of cheating, we think of the high school dropout who never gave two hoots about any core subject, cared little about their grades, Googled every answer on their homework and snuck looks at their neighbor's papers during tests. We don't picture the Ivy League-bound, extracurricularly-involved poster child, whose shining college resume owes a decent portion of its perfection to online notes and generous group chats swapping completed assignments.

Learning and understanding fade into the background when college preparations begin, because college applications, along with the rest of the adult population, demand good grades and test scores from students by any means necessary. In a perfect world, students would earn their grades and scores with integrity.

Unfortunately, we don't live in that world.

So no, John Doe can't drop his extracurriculars, because he'd never get into college with that lack of involvement. Yet Harvard would hate if he failed his classes, so he joins a group chat with his friends from math, and they divide the work in the packet. He skims through Sparknotes for his assigned English reading and scrolls through Quizlet for the answers to his science worksheet. This leaves enough time to attend history conferences before a three-hours sports practice. He finally has time for a meal with his family, making plans to see his friends on the weekend before going to bed at a reasonable hour. His integrity died along the way, but it was a small price for his sanity.

Children have become their test scores. Teachers see their pupils as percentages and letters. Colleges see their applicants as numbers and essays. School districts can't see their students as the future of this world when all they seem to want is for their children to get good grades so that the school can reflect that success.

Students know this. They feel the insufferable pressure to become that coveted, yet nearly unattainable, "A," and they crack under that weight. They know that "A" isn't worth the tears, sleepless nights and the misery and so they have resorted to a less respectable route to get there.

Who can blame them?

Preparing Newcomers for the Road Ahead

MARGI WEISS//THE SHAKERITE

James Casale, who began the school year as a long-term substitute in the English Department, leads a 10 Honors English class discussion about the E. L. Doctorow's novel "Ragtime" Dec.3 in Room 156.

Communicating Shaker culture key to helping new faculty

EMET CELESTE-COHEN AND ANDREW MOHAR
JOURNALISM I REPORTERS

The Board of Education had received a pressing message. The subject field read: "Revise On-boarding." The July 10 memorandum, filed by Chief of Staff Marla Robinson, outlined plans for improving the teacher integration process.

"On-boarding is much more than completing forms," the message stated. The new plans outline an on-boarding during the week before school started, that people new to the district attended. There, teacher-based teams -- designated by subject -- planned the first weeks of school. They discussed things such as the curriculum and new regulations. They also reviewed MYP standards and International Baccalaureate protocol.

The on-boarding process serves many purposes, the foremost being, "Fostering an in-depth understanding and acceptance of an organization's culture, values, expectations and priorities."

The district hoped to inform each "new team member" of "[Shaker's] mission, vision, goals, policies, practices, structures and functions... One important aspect of on-boarding is to assist a new team member with the acclimation to the culture of our district."

Long-term substitutes, like all substitutes, are certified teachers equivalent to permanent teachers in every way except that, once the permanent teacher returns, they lose their positions.

"It is very hard to get placed in a district and just go."

VICTORIA BERNDT

Before U.S. History and Economics teacher Bradley Bullard came to Shaker, he was required to engage in special training. Bullard went to a three-day International Baccalaureate training program in Toronto and appeared at meetings of varying importance during the summer. All of the new teachers also attended on-boarding the week before school started.

One benefit of having that week to prepare, Bullard said, was collaboration. "We learned to work better together, as a team." He was also glad to "be able to hear people in the administration talk about their ideas and their visions for the future."

James Casale is a long-term substitute in the English Department. He attended the week of on-boarding this year. \

"They introduced the new teachers to the Shaker philosophy and community. There was a panel of students and residents who answered questions," he said. "There was a general embracement of the Shaker ideology."

Victoria Berndt, the long-term history substitute for social studies teachers Jessica O'Brien and Paul Kelly, attend the preparatory week. O'Brien was also able to go. It was the "first time somebody was there who taught the class I was covering for. It was very helpful," Berndt said.

Berndt said she thought it would be "extremely stressful" to come into the district without some sort of introduction like the one she experienced.

Berndt taught at Riverside High School in Painesville Township for a year before coming to Shaker. She said the introduction process at Riverside was extremely stressful for her. There was no introduction process like the one offered at Shaker and she had little time to acclimate herself. "It is very hard to get placed in a district and just go," she said.

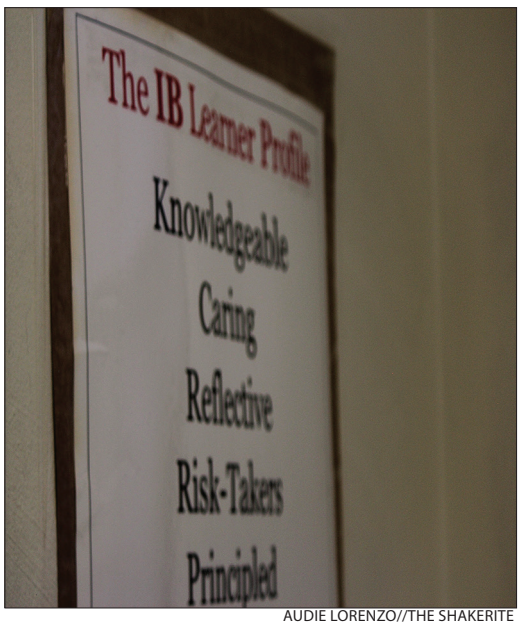
Berndt believes that Shaker operates a more effective on-boarding program for long-term substitutes and new teachers than most districts.

It is more difficult "coming in mid-year if there is a strong attachment to the teacher," said Casale, "or if my teaching style conflicts with that of the previous teacher, it can be more difficult to integrate."

For substitutes who are take over classes for shorter periods, adapting to the Shaker culture is less of a problem. Many are not briefed on the classroom curriculum. Long-term substitutes are different. They instruct the class, and they get to know their students. Most of them have contracts lasting a semester or longer.

Shaker is known for a unique academic culture revolving around the interactions between teachers and students. The district website states, "We believe: each student is valued. Every student must succeed. Diversity makes us stronger. Breadth of experience is vital... We are all accountable."

OSE ARHEGHAN//THE SHAKERITE



AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

International Baccalaureate is a strong pillar of Shaker's identity; it's something that new teachers are required to teach by. There are plenty of reminders: The letters "IB" hang in the door of Room 223, the high school's IB office; A sign listing the IB learner attributes is posted on the wall of Room 233, one can be found in nearly every classroom in the district; An IB mirror collage is fastened on the wall outside of the office.

The philosophy continues: "The District will nurture, educate, and graduate students who are civic-minded and prepared to make ethical decisions; who are confident, competent communicators, skillful in problem solving, capable of creative thinking; who have a career motivation and a knowledge of our global and multicultural society."

The Shaker culture poses a challenge to newcomers, be they teachers or students.

Dale Whittington, director of research and accountability, spoke Dec. 3 at the Bridging the Gap panel facilitated by the Student Group on Race Relations.

"We are not that effective in enabling people to acclimate to Shaker," she said, referring to students and families new to the district.

"We make it that much more difficult to become part of the district life and adopt our district's values and ways."

This is why so many find the on-boarding week so helpful.

"I do not find it too difficult because my philosophy of education is in accordance with those of Shaker," Casale said.

"The one difficulty is that there is an expectation for me to teach a curriculum with certain aspects such as time restrictions, that limit other instructional techniques that I would typically employ.

"Even with a highly-skilled hire, failure to acculturate and transition sucessfully can have disastrous results."

MARLA ROBINSON

"Because the honors curriculum here is so rigorous and extensive, I cannot add my own units.

"I cannot do choice literature [discussion] circles, which promotes creativity and personal choice."

"As a substitute, it is hard to combat a culture that is so firmly established," he continued.

"The problem [with after-school conferences] is that class time is often not as valued because students can go to conferences. They can cut classes and such because they have that safety net."

However, all of the new permanent instructors received a week of preparation. Mentor teachers will also guide them throughout the year.

These mentors are required to spend 18 hours over the school year with their mentee. They provide guidance about anything they can, while observing them and giving feedback.

Long-term substitutes do not receive mentorship and few benefits compared to teachers. Generally, their salary is lower, and they lack job security.

Also, long-term substitutes are not given the right to a interview for a job should one become available at the conclusion of his or her service.

Long-term substitutes are not eligible to join the Shaker Heights Teachers Association -- the teachers' union.

Substitutes are hired through a service called Rachel Wixey & Associates, which guarantees some benefits, but not as many as teachers receive.

Even with prior knowledge of Shaker, it took science teacher James Schmidt a year to fully adopt the Shaker culture, he said.

He estimated that it could take three years for a teacher coming in without that exposure.

"People come to Shaker for the schools, there are very high standards and expectations for our educators.

"It's often tough for new teachers to understand this," he said.

Not every long-term absence can be anticipated, however. Eric Babcock was hired as a mathematics long-term substitute the day that school started and thus did not attend the on-boarding sessions.

"There is a lot of uncertainty," coming in with that little notice, Babcock said.

Calls seeking comment about the district's procedures for hiring and supporting long-term substitutes on short notice were not returned.

"Even with a highly-skilled hire," read the memorandum written by Robinson, "failure to acculturate and transition successfully can have disastrous results."

Honors Students Ditch Honor System

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BYGRACE LOUGHEED//THE SHAKERITE

Large amounts of homework assignments affect students' sleep. The choice between completing assignments and getting enough rest encourages students to cheat, which compromises the value of the assignments in question.

As technology changes, so do student attitudes about cheating on homework

OSE ARHEGHAN INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

The moral struggle between academic honesty and academic achievement pushes Shaker students to stray from the honor code.

"It's easier to copy someone else's work and only have to actually do the work every other day or every three days instead of every night," junior Samantha Rose said. "Students would also rather spend their time sleeping, studying for tests, attending sports practice or hanging out with friends rather than doing homework."

Students often cite their heavy work loads as a reason for cutting corners.

"Part of it is laziness, for sure," sophomore Emma Duhamel said, "but some teachers give more homework than needed, and a lot of times it's busy work that doesn't serve too much of a purpose, so people aren't interested in doing it.

"A lot of times, people are up way later than they should be trying to complete homework," she said. "We're encouraged to do extracurriculars, but then we don't get home until 6 or 7, and sometimes people give up [on assignments] at unreasonable hours and just try to figure out how to get the points and the sleep."

Sophomore Drew Hubbard noted how students begin to prioritize their work.

"Most of the time [cheating occurs] because of the other work they have to do," she said. "Like, for instance, if someone has a huge paper due the next day and a small science worksheet it's more important to do the paper rather than the science, and no one likes to turn in anything late."

"I think the prevalence of [cheating] is tied to the pressure that students are feeling," Social studies teacher Tim Mitchell said. "I also recognize it's tied to the amount of work that people are being asked to do.

"The pressure to compete, the pressure to take on a lot of high-level academic work that's really time consuming provides a pretty good rationale for a lot of kids to compromise themselves," he said.

"The pressure to compete, the pressure to take on a lot of high-level academic work that's really time-consuming provides a pretty good rationale for a lot of kids to compromise themselves."

TIM MITCHELL

Experts, however, have a different take on the matter.

"When confronted with cheating, we too easily accept the notion that the stakes are high and kids cheat out of desperation," Steve Nelson, the Head of Calhoun School in Manhattan, stated in a Huffington Post piece titled, "Cheating Because the Stakes are so Low."

Nelson explained that when students become disheartened, the moral integrity to complete work is lost.

"When a textbook or teacher's 'facts' are the primary or only consideration, students are engaged only in succeeding in the game," he stated. "The rote process of filling heads with information and testing it out has little relevance to student's passions, values, imagination or critical capacities.

"Cheating in this context violates very little of what really matters to young men and women," Nelson stated. "Neither the process nor the product represents much of who they really are."

"People are more willing to put in work if it'll help in the long run," Duhamel, the sophomore, said, "If the homework is actually good practice for a test, people will treat the assignment like studying."

Nelson suggested changing the assignments teachers dole out in order to cut cheating.

"In every discipline, good pedagogy invites students to invest themselves in the process and, as a corollary, in the product," he stated.

"When a student's unique point of view or creation is invited and appreciated, cheating is neither necessary nor possible."

In an article published in The Atlantic, teacher Jessica Lahey took morals out of the equation.

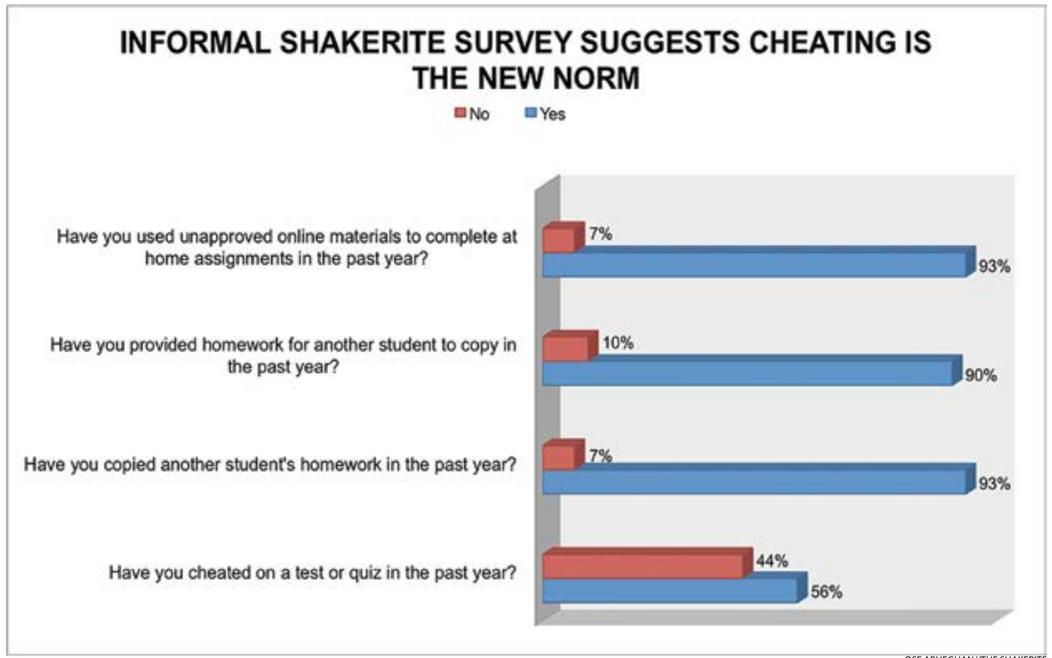
"I specifically avoided a discussion of the question of student ethics and character in my article," she stated, "not because I wanted to exonerate students from their share of the blame, but because I hoped to focus on pedagogy's role in academic dishonesty."

Lahey posted a letter from an unnamed college to demonstrate the disconnect between students and teachers when it comes to academic dishonesty.

"It boils down to this: we are told that cheating is wrong because we are attempting to earn a grade that we do not deserve . . . But my contention uses identical reasoning," the student stated. "I cheated because the grade I would have otherwise been given was not reflective of my true learning."

This student went on to illustrate examples of his experiences.

"I took 9 AP tests in high school, scoring 5s on all of them except the one I self-studied for, on which I earned a 4. Never


INFORMAL SHAKERITE SURVEY SUGGESTS CHEATING IS THE NEW NORM
No
Yes
Have you used unapproved online materials to complete at home assignments in the past year?
7%
93%
Have you provided homework for another student to copy in the past year?
10%
90%
Have you copied another student's homework in the past year?
7%
93%
Have you cheated on a test or quiz in the past year?
44%
56%

OSE ARHEGHAN//THE SHAKERITE

Seventy-two students taking one or more honors, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate class, were polled about academic dishonesty. Fifty-six percent of students polled admitted cheating on a test or quiz in the past year, 93 percent admitted copying a student's homework in the past year, 90 percent admitted providing homework for someone else to copy in the past year and 93 percent admitted using unapproved online resources to complete at home assignments.

did I cheat on any of those tests, because I felt that they were fair representations of my learning," he stated.

"But in AP Biology, I cheated on literally every in-class test. The curriculum and test techniques of my absolutely atrocious AP Biology class were not fair representations of my knowledge. I felt cheated of the education I deserved, and thus to earn the grade I knew I deserved, I had to cheat the system."

Shaker students agreed that a change in the system would help curb cheating.

"[We need to] find a way to make work more meaningful," sophomore Jacob Connell said. "A kid won't want to do legitimate work if it isn't rewarding."

Connell briefly explained what he thought would be more beneficial.

"I personally think the best way is to put learning above grades and tests," he said, "School should be about the experience and preparing you for life, not about worrying about bumping your grade up a point before big tests."

"[Teachers should] give reasonable amounts of helpful homework," Duhamel said. "No one wants to be up at four in the morning doing busy work. Also, if teachers write their own homework assignments instead of borrowing from the Internet, that means that students can't just Google the answer."

Mitchell highlighted reasons why students should be doing their own work.

"I know that may seem idealistic, but you should really learn these concepts rather than

"School should be about the experience and preparing you for life, not about worrying about bumping your grade up a point before big tests."

JACOB CONNELL

copying the answers," he said. "The peer pressure is there, and there are so many other competitive pressures, but for the most part, the people who follow a path of integrity are going to learn more."

In a 2012 survey, the Josephson Institute's Center for Youth Ethics, a Los Angeles based non-profit organization, examined the ethics of youth in America.

The center surveyed 23,000 students from 100 different high schools and found that 51 percent of students had cheated on an exam in the past year, 32 percent copied online resources to complete school assignments and 55 percent lied to a teacher about something significant.

In light of these results, The Shakerite conducted an informal survey to gauge Shaker students' ethics. Seventy-two students, taking one or more honors, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate class, were polled about academic dishonesty.

Fifty-six percent of students polled admitted cheating on a test or quiz in the past year, 93 percent admitted copying a student's homework in the past year, 90 percent admitted providing homework for someone else to copy in the past year and 93 percent admitted using unapproved online resources to complete at home assignments.

Students frequently admitted to using websites such as Yahoo Answers, Quizlet and Course Hero to complete take-home tests, Mastering Biology and Chemistry assignments and daily homework assignments.

"If the questions are out of a textbook, you can basically just Google the answers, or if they're just checking for completion, people sometimes just jot down random things to appear like they've done the work," Duhamel said.

Social studies teacher Silvia Sheppard gave a teacher's perspective on cheating methods.

"What I find is students taking pictures of it and copying it down because they don't see the value in reading the textbook and taking notes," she explained. "They say, 'If I'm just writing down what's in the textbook then what's the point? Why can't I just copy it from someone else?', not understanding that if you don't actually read the context then you won't understand the material.

"And then they're confused about why they don't do well on the test, it's because they're doing homework and for the sake of doing homework, they're cheating on it by not taking the full experience. They don't understand the material," she said.

Connell also witnessed students cheating.

"[I've seen students] sending each other homework answers, finding answers online and lying to get extensions," he said.

Students polled did not widely consider those methods to be cheating. Mitchell said the Internet has enabled students to cheat more often and more easily.

"I think what's happened with the advent of the Internet and availability, there's so many more ways to get information and use it as your own," Mitchell said. "There are a number of people who just grab stuff. They cut, paste and there's an assignment, and they

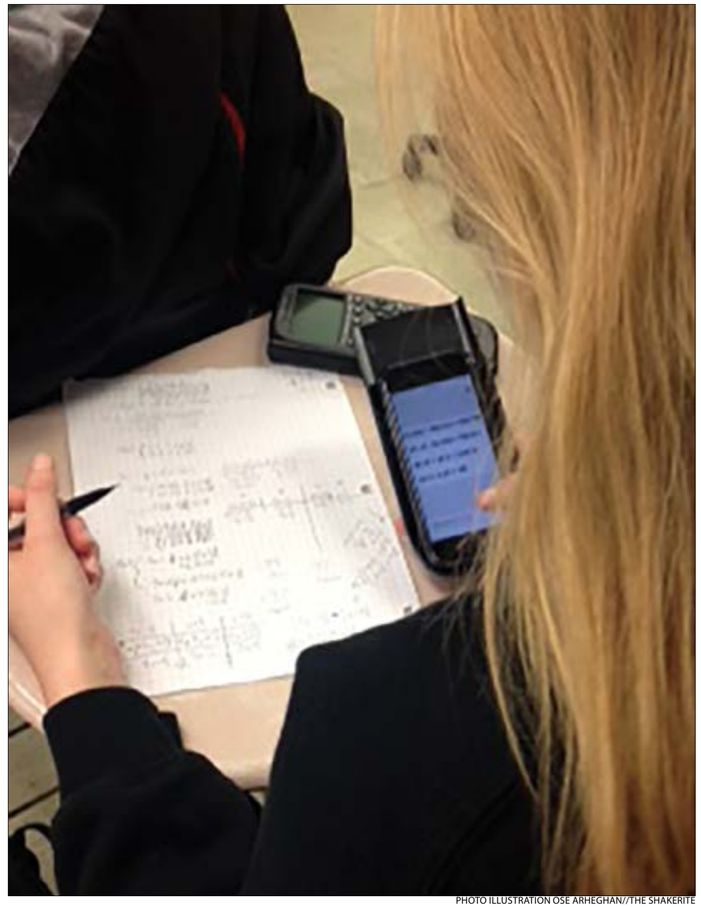


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION OSE ARHEGHAN//THE SHAKERITE

"What I find is students taking pictures of [homework] and copying it down because they don't see the value in reading the textbook and taking notes," social studies teacher Silvia Sheppard said.

don't appreciate what that means.

"The Internet just makes it so easy," he said. "There's a lot of compelling rationale, there's a lot of access, and I think it's an increasingly difficult problem."

Sheppard explained how cheating has changed with the Internet.

"Plagiarism has become much more common," she said, "sometimes students don't understand that they're plagiarising when they copy and paste just off the Internet.

"That's added a whole new layer. Before, back in the day when you just wrote answers on a piece of paper and hid it in your sleeve. So I think that there are many more temptations and many more sophisticated ways to cheat."

Despite this, Mitchell still sees the Internet as a strong resource for students.

"For [Advanced Placement United States] history, I encourage students to use whatever they can find," he said, "They're not in place of real learning or reading the text, but why wouldn't you take advantage of those? Why wouldn't you use everything that's available to you to learn this material - in that sense, tech is a positive, because it gives students a lot of tools."

Mitchell weighed in on how students use the Internet.

"In some ways, it's still the student's initiative, they're still out there learning," he said, "They learned the answer to that question.

"Unfortunately, it might have been the same answer to a question I was asking them in an assessment, but they aren't getting all of those questions." he said.

Mitchell noted that for assignments such as International Baccalaureate assessments and National History Day projects, he uses TurnItIn.com, a web-based resource to identify plagiarized material.

"I'm sure some do, but I don't think it's a common thing. [The policy] is not enforced, so people can get away with it."

EMMA DUHAMEL

"I don't know if that's going to battle with sticks and stones when the other people have Uzis in terms of the availability of cheating versus our ability to try to stem the tide," he said. "But personally, what I want is for people to say is that it does make a difference in who you are and the character you hold to try to do the right thing, because to make compromises is to compromise your integrity, and it also compromises your learning."

Sheppard provided insight on what teachers could do to combat cheating.

"You can do things in your classroom to make it more difficult to cheat," she said, "Different forms of tests, monitor the room, prohibit cell phones out at all during the test, don't allow students to leave to the bathroom with their phones."

Sheppard also explained why students should be doing their own work.

"The way to combat [cheating] is to teach the ethics to students about cheating," she said, "that cheating is ultimately you're cheating yourself. That's the bottom line, you're cheating yourself. There are times when you can take shortcuts in life but by and large in the real world you can't take shortcuts, you gotta know what you're doing, that's part of the learning process and it helps you be more adaptive in your life."

According to the International Baccalaureate: Middle Years Programme Shaker Heights High School District Academic Honesty Policy for the 2015-2016 school year, examples of cheating include, "Copying from another's test, using unauthorized study aids in place of reading an assigned text, allowing another to copy one's work, taking another's information from online -- in text or in person -- and presenting it as his/her own or using a cheat sheet."

Although all students were to sign this agreement at the beginning of the school year, few adhere to it.

"Shaker doesn't enforce it, so the students don't follow it," Rose, the junior, said.

"I'm sure some do, but I don't think it's a common thing," Duhamel said, "[The policy] is not enforced, so people can get away with it."

"I didn't even know we had [a policy]," said Connell. "I don't remember signing a paper."

According to the honesty policy, students are, "Duty bound to take action to stop any violation of the Honor Policy."

"I think we can't imagine that our Shaker kids are going to be that different from the masses of humans in this box. I'm sure that there's a range of behaviors," Mitchell said.

"We hope that having conversations about the honor code will help dissuade people from choosing what I see as a dishonorable," he said, "but ultimately a kid has to live with their own conscious. I think we give due diligence, but I don't doubt that there are still ways to cut corners."

Investigations reporter Elena Weingart and Journalism I reporters Andrew Mohar and Emet Celeste-Cohen contributed reporting.

Shaker's diversity spans so much further than race

OUR GILDED AGE OF DIVERSITY

GRACE LOUGHEED//THE SHAKERITE

Audrey Anderle ('15) crafted a mural for her senior project displaying the diversity in Shaker. The mural depicts Shaker students in various clubs and sports including Model United Nations, cheerleading, robotics, chior, orchestra and MAC Scholars.

The word and images are ubiquitous, but to matter, diversity should be a practice

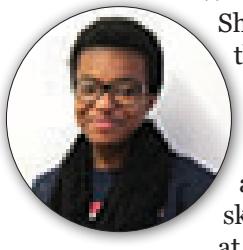
If there's one word every Shaker student knows, it's diversity.

On the surface that appears to be a good thing, but I can't help but be frustrated.

It seems that whenever we talk about diversity, it's shorthand for racial diversity.

Shaker's diversity spans so much further than race.

It embraces age, ethnicity, class, gender, religious status, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, educational background, income, parental status and life experiences.



Ose Arheghan
Investigations Editor

When I think about Shaker's diversity, I think about the freshman working through trigonometry in an eleventh grade class and the male figure skater drilling routines at the rink.

I think about the women's rugby team and the men's choir.

So why is it that when we talk about diversity, the racially diverse photos on the district's website are the first thing that come to mind?

When did all the other aspects of diversity take a backseat to race?

"Talk is cheap, of course," New York Times article "Has 'Diversity' Lost Its Meaning," states, "And sometimes you get the sense that the people talking the most about diversity are the people doing the least effective work on it."

In addition to entertaining the idea that the definition of diversity has been skewed to encompass poor integration efforts, the article also highlights the implicit racial connotations that the word itself has gained.

"In reality -- which is to say, when applied to actual people, not flora, fauna or financial securities -- the notion of diversity feels more fraught, positioning one group [white, male Americans] as the default, and everyone else as the Other," it stated.

This process of taking minimal integration and labeling it diversity isn't helping anyone.

Poor attempts at racial inclusion are never going to be the end-all, be-all of diversity, and all they do is cheapen the real deal.

Queensborough College -- a New-York based school that prides itself on reflecting the diversity of Queens -- defines diversity as a concept rather than something finite.

So why is it that when we talk about diversity, the racially diverse photos on the district's website are the first thing that come to mind?

"We acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but also can be fluid," their website states. "We respect individual rights to self-identification, and we recognize that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.

The idea of looking at diversity as an action - a conscious practice of acceptance and respect, spanning past one's own background and personal ideas - is one we need to adopt, because touting diversity doesn't achieve anything if we can't even agree on what diversity is.

The other issue with our blind admiration for Shaker's diversity is the missed opportunity for self-improvement.

Without admitting that we have a problem, we cannot move forward and fix it.

Don't get me wrong -- Shaker is home to people from all walks of life, and the environment is definitely welcoming.

However, with that much disparity, there is room for ignorance and bias.

Without first acknowledging the issues in how we define our diversity, we can't move to combat them.

Read more at **shakerite.com**

Slang Revolutionizes Shaker Vocabulary

Students and faculty reflect on their colloquial dialect, both original and nationwide

EMILY BOARDMAN AND HANNAH KORNBLUT
SPOTLIGHT EDITORS

Shaker students sling slang like they are dealing cards.

Shaker Heights High School is a rich environment formation of its own unique usage and formation of slang words.

Slang words and phrases enable students to communicate informally with their peers. Slang is often restricted to groups of people -- usually teenagers -- and in specific contexts. Teenagers typically use slang because they see it as a way to communicate informally.

"To me, it means a modern version of words," sophomore Josh Jacobs said.

Words can be spelled or pronounced differently to create a new meaning. Shaker Heights students have used a variety of slang in past years. Some words come from social media, while others pop up without a clear source.

"Slang, to me, are words or phrases used during casual conversations that form a unique dialect for a specific group of people," sophomore Sarah Wingo said.

The popularization of social media allows slang to spread across the country faster and more easily, exposing more people to a new word.

However, Shaker has maintained its unique slang vocabulary. "Slang at our school likely differs from Cleveland or Warrensville Heights," second-year English teacher Molly Miles said.

"I think Shaker has, in a way, formed our own slang vocabulary," Wingo said.

Slang terms popular among students include *sacked* (to be shut down), *blouse* (an exaggerated no), *on fleek* (to be flawless), and the most popular Shaker-specific term, *neck* (used when someone does something ridiculous).

"I think Shaker has a semi-unique slang dialect, but we share some slang with other places," junior Elise LaFramboise said.

"I hear it from friends, or we make it up," Jacobs said.

Freshman Theo Miller moved to Iowa from Shaker at the end of the 2014-15 school year.

"When I was [at Shaker], I heard *neck* the most often," Miller said. "I live in Davenport, Iowa now. The slang is different but it is still there," he said.

Sophomore Amelia Morris moved to California from Shaker in November of the 2014-15 school year.

"Shaker has both its own slang, along with the adaptation of more national terms," Morris said. "To me, slang is a word, term, or phrase that starts off with no specific meaning, and adapts its way into a region's lifestyle."

HANNAH KORNBLUT//THE SHAKERITE

During passing periods, the high school hallways are filled with students speaking slang unique to Shaker Heights, such as *neck* and *sacking*.

"They are surprised that I can pick up on their new-fangled culture."

JASON WALKER

While slang does differ by region, so do traditional words and phrases. "In California, it's called a permit instead of temps. If I am talking to someone in Ohio, and I use the term *permit*, it will cause confusion, and I'll then have to explain how it's a temp," Morris said.

"Slang in Shaker tends to spread pretty fast between friend groups and grades," Wingo said.

"In Shaker, you could stumble upon a word, change it's meaning, and the term would spread like wildfire," Morris said. "Within a week, it will be making its way into everyday situations. Some slang has been worked on to become a thing, and some become a common term without much effort, like *necking*."

Teachers occasionally choose to use some of the trendy words in class as a joke to increase the students' attention.

"I think students connect better with teachers that use slang because it helps students feel more comfortable with the teachers," Jacobs said.

"Kids think it's funny when a teacher uses slang because sometimes they use it wrong, or we don't expect them to know what a word means or how to use it," freshman Sophie Greff said.

"I can imagine it's because they think it's funny that someone older or in authority is coming down to their level and connecting through their commonly used phrases," Miles said.

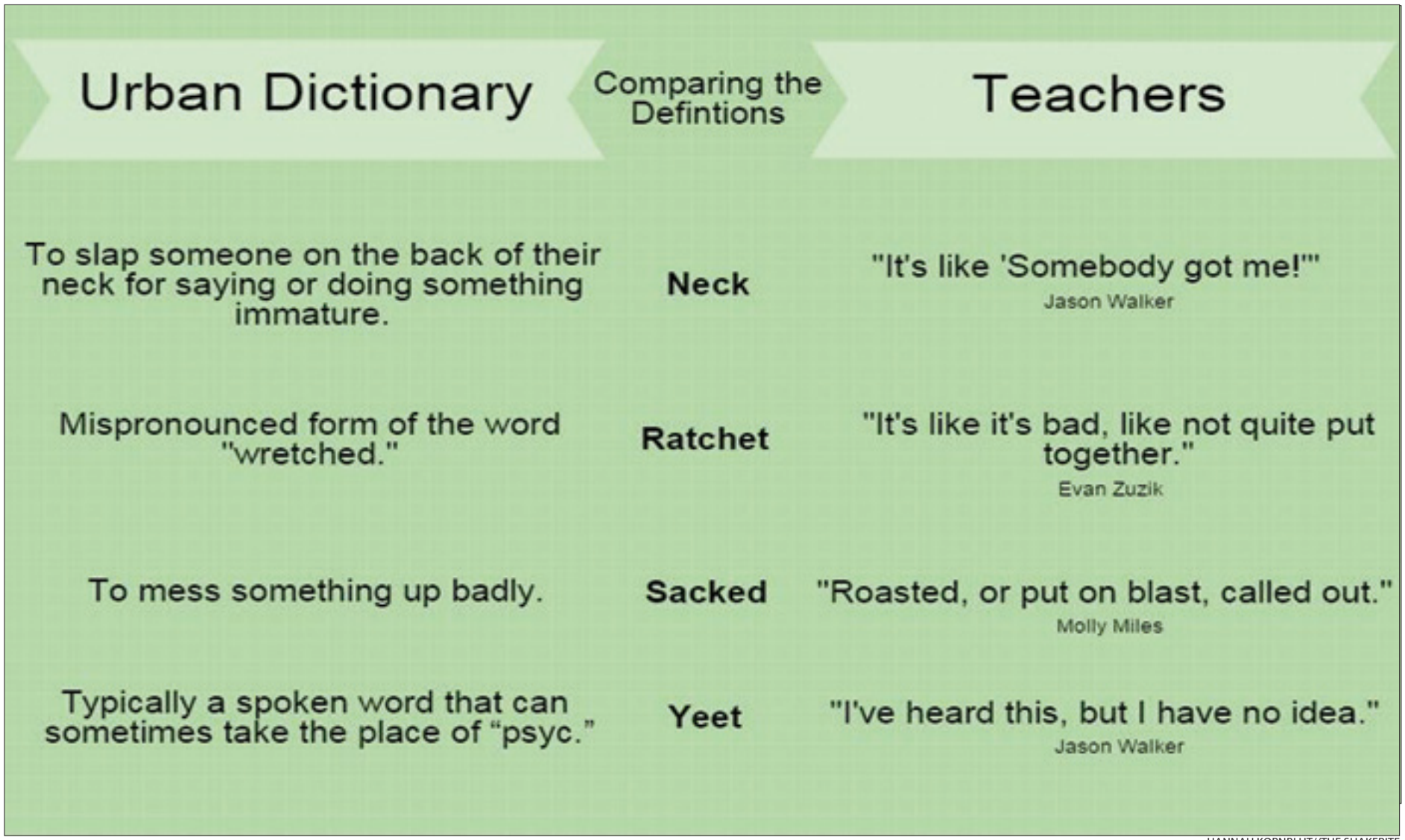
Science teacher Jason Walker said that often the first time he uses slang in a class he gets a reaction, especially if he says it correctly.

"If I use it incorrectly, I get a much different type of laugh," Walker said.

"I often only use slang to sound silly," science teacher Evan Zuzik said. "I have never said 'thirsty' seriously."

"They are surprised that I can pick up on their new-fangled culture," Walker said of his students.

Teachers used different slang terms


Urban Dictionary
Comparing the Defintions
Teachers
To slap someone on the back of their neck for saying or doing something immature.
Neck
"It's like 'Somebody got me!'"
Jason Walker
Mispronounced form of the word "wretched."
Ratchet
"It's like it's bad, like not quite put together."
Evan Zuzik
To mess something up badly.
Sacked
"Roasted, or put on blast, called out."
Molly Miles
Typically a spoken word that can sometimes take the place of "psyc."
Yeet
"I've heard this, but I have no idea."
Jason Walker

HANNAH KORNBLUT//THE SHAKERITE

while in high school, proof that it changes quickly.

"We used to say *like* a lot. 'Like, what are you, like, doing for, like, dinner tonight?' It used to drive everyone crazy," said Zuzik, who graduated from high school in 2005. He also mentioned that people would say "24/7" frequently, something that still pops up today.

When Miles was in high school, students would use the phrase *that's so jake,* which meant something was lame.

Teachers often rely on their students to define slang for them. "Sometimes I just blatantly ask students to define it. Initially many are hesitant to share," Miles said.

"I often either ask another teacher, ask a student or Google," Zuzik said.

Zuzik also said that occasionally he doesn't know if a particular word or phrase is disrespectful or should be said in a school setting.

"*Netflix and chill* threw me a bit," said Miles. "When I first heard the meaning, I was shocked."

The expression began as a euphemism for what was previously called *hooking up*, but now, most people use it ironically. "To me, it still means gorging on ice-cream while binge-watching my favorite shows," Miles said.

"I think I usually look confused and then a student explains it to me," science teacher Michelle Child said about hearing new words in the classroom.

"*Netflix and chill* threw me a bit. When I first heard the meaning, I was shocked."

MOLLY MILES

"At least they're branching their vocabulary!" Walker said.

Slang comes from people all around the country, often spreading through Vine, a form of social media in which six-second videos are uploaded, usually to be humorous.

A common word that popped up in the 2014-2015 school year was *got 'eme*, a variation of *got 'em*, which originated from Vine and is used to respond negatively to another's statement. It still pops up in conversation.

"Even if you don't use a term or phrase, you've probably heard [of] it," Wingo said.

When students encounter a new word that they don't know, they consult Urban Dictionary. The site contains hip slang and phrases that people say helps with definitions and examples of the terms, typically written by teenagers. Some definitions are more tasteful than others.

The site also offers definitions of slang terms that are no longer in style and provides the most popular definition for easy learning.

The Urban Dictionary definition of *on fleek* is "the quality of being perfect, or on point."

"It's kinda fun getting teachers 'hip to our lingo,' " Wingo said.

Often, students use slang more than necessary, even several times in one sentence.

"It's annoying when kids try to use it more than they should. They're trying to use it to use it," Walker said.

"The one that continues to come up that I personally feel is overdone and not funny is the infatuation with the number 21," Miles said, referring to a Vine in which a man asked a little boy what 9 plus 10 equals. The boy responded, "Twenty-one" in a peculiar voice.

So far this school year, a few new words have popped up in the hallways. The most popular seems to be *sacked*, as in, "that test really sacked me."

Other recent Shaker slang fads include *yeet* (a word that can take the place of *psyc*), *sus* (something suspicious), and *bet* (an agreement).

"A word stays in style until another word takes its place," Greff said.

"I think modern slang terms tend to be an odd mix of words from other generations and something that we created," Wingo said.

A slang word's lifespan can last for months, or even years, depending on how much people love a certain word.

Everything goes in and out of style, especially slang, and sometimes words come back into the spotlight.

"People will use slang until it's not 'cool' anymore," Miller said.

"Is triflin' coming back?" Zuzik asked. "I hope so."

Teacher by Day, Police Adviser by Night

Choir director Mario Clopton aims to help relations between Cleveland police, community

EMET CELESTE-COHEN JOURNALISM I REPORTER

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Choir Director Mario Clopton leads his second period class in rehearsal Nov. 20. Clopton played viola and tenor saxophone as a child in Solon.

America is going through uncomfortable times. Harsh displays of the racist side of our country pervade the media.

If change is to come to Cleveland, people such as Mario Clopton, the high school's choir director, will be the reason why.

The news of Tamir Rice's killing by Cleveland police brought tears to Clopton's eyes.

He teaches choir at the high school and middle school and "the connection of imagining one of my kids being shot, it affected me," he said.

Eight months later, Clopton volunteered to be on the Community Police Commission, a commission created with the intent of fixing the problem of police brutality in Cleveland.

Clopton was born into a musical family. His uncles rapped for record deals, and his grandparents sang in doo-wop groups.

As a child in elementary school, he played the viola and the tenor saxophone. Music was always important to him because, Clopton said, "I've always felt that I speak through my music."

However, Clopton's childhood was filled with more than just music. As one of the few black households in Solon, his family was singled out.

Meet the Newbies

He remembered small things. "We would have a Labor Day party," said Clopton, "and they would ask us to turn down our music even though our music wasn't that loud."

He said that he was often warned, "you can't be around in the neighborhood with toy guns, even squirt guns, things that don't even look like weapons."

"People's perception of you stops at your skin color," his family would say. "People don't know how wonderful you are as a person; all they see is your skin."

Clopton's family is proud of his effort to initiate change, "They expect good things from me. Because I expect good things from myself. It has become the 'Mario Standard,' " Clopton said.

Driving to college, Clopton and his friends, both white, were pulled over. The State Highway Patrol officer asked everyone to relinquish their driver's license.

He then told Clopton, who was sitting in the back, to step out of the car. Clopton often tells people, "You can't wear your degrees on your face."

He said that when he leaves Shaker Heights High School, he is just another black man, "which seems to be the focus of a lot of policing in our community."

He has noticed a very clear bias in Cleveland that he hopes he can fix.

"Fifty years from now, I wanted to tell my grandkids I did everything I could to see that through."

MARIO CLOPTON

In the middle of Clopton's third year of college, he packed his bags and drove his 1998 Ford Taurus from California State University to Montana to join Barack Obama's presidential campaign.

Clopton stayed with it all the way to Washington. "Fifty years from now, I wanted to tell my grandkids I did everything I could to see that through," he said.

That brief exposure to the world of politics is partially responsible for Clopton's decision to volunteer for the commission. The more relevant factor, however, is that he lives in Tremont. As a Clevelander, he is "determined to be here and raise [his] family here."

Clopton grew up in the Miles-Harvard neighborhood of Cleveland. After college, he moved back to the Lee-Harvard District.

He is now living in Tremont with his fiance. "I chose to come back to Cleveland," said Clopton, "because I believe it's not just up and coming. It's here."

Clopton said he became a teacher because it allowed him, "to change lives every day, even in face-to-face conversations."

Sophomore Ruby Gibson is a choir member and said Clopton's presence is appealing. "He is very energetic and bright and bouncy," she said. "It's infectious."

Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old African-American boy, was fatally shot Nov. 22, 2014 by Cleveland police officer Timothy Loehmann. "They didn't even give him a chance to cooperate," Rice's mother, Samaria Rice, said in an interview with NBC News. Tamir didn't receive medical attention until four minutes after he was shot, when an FBI agent arrived. When his sister tried to help, the police handcuffed her and locked her in their car. Loehmann had left his earlier position as an officer facing termination due to a "dangerous loss of composure" and an inability to follow "basic functions as instructed." His partner, who drove the car, was Frank Garmback. The city had to settle a $100,000 lawsuit in 2014 brought by a woman who said that on Aug. 7, 2010, Garmback "rushed and placed her in a chokehold, tackled her to the ground, twisted her wrist and began hitting her body." She had called the police to report a car blocking her driveway. Loehmann and Garmback claimed they told Rice to raise his hands three times. A video of the event shows them pull up and shoot him almost immediately.

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Clopton studies the music score while leading his class in song. Clopton attended California State University, where he studied music, and he left midway through to join the Obama Presidential Campaign.

Clopton teaches during period 11, after school. Gus Mahoney, junior, is one of the students in that class. "He likes to joke around a lot but he is very determined to teach us," he said.

Sometimes Clopton talks to his students about his role on the commission. "It's really interesting to have a teacher so active in the community," Mahoney said.

"He's not only teaching us about music, he's teaching us about life and politics and social issues."

Less than two weeks after the Tamir Rice shooting, the Department of Justice's investigation of the Cleveland Department of Police -- which began March 13, 2013 -- was released.

The Consent Decree, based on their findings, was made public several months later.

While neither mention the shooting of Tamir Rice specifically, they address the conditions that led to it.

The decree outlines deadline requirements for the Cleveland Police Department.

These requirements detail police officer training in "use-of-force decision-making, use-of-force reporting requirements, the Fourth Amendment and de-escalation of conflict techniques," providing guidelines for the creation and responsibilities of the Community Police Commission.

> **"He's not only teaching us about music, he's teaching us about life and politics and social issues."**
>
> **GUS MAHONEY**

The commission's goal is to advise and assess the "police policies, procedures, practices and cultures" of the Cleveland Division of Police

Clopton was chosen, out of nearly 200 volunteers, to be one of the commission's 13 members.

Soon after, he was elected one of the three members to lead the group as a chairperson.

Phyllis Harris, a member of the selection panel, said Clopton was picked for several reasons, the most prominent of which are because he is a young black male representing the LGBT community, and he is in contact with youth every day.

"His engagement with advocacy, social justice and the political process" were also important, Harris said.

"I knew he was an out, gay man and I thought it was important that he was authentic and comfortable in his skin."

"I have a son at Shaker Heights High School, and I would see Mario as a role model for everyone," Harris added.

However, she said, he wasn't chosen purely because he's a politically involved citizen of a minority group.

He's an optimist, someone this city needs right now, she said.

Many people have become jaded to the political process, but Clopton believes "that government is a place where real people can be represented, and real positive things for regular people can happen."

Clopton thinks that while commissions such as Cleveland's have failed in the past, this time will be different.

"It is court mandated; there are things that we have to get done," he said.

"I am determined to make sure this commission follows through."

When Clopton was a child, his family regularly told him to "comply and then follow up later," be it with teachers or police.

His effort to change police practices after the shooting death of Rice is an example of that strategy.

"For our sake, we had better be good," he said. "Real lives are at stake."

Gift Cards Spoil the Holiday Spirit

Plastic cash allows more people to avoid buying unique presents

ASTRID BRAUN AND EMILIE EVANS
JOURNALISM I REPORTERS

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MARGI WEISS//THE SHAKERITE

With the rise of technology and a shift in values, gift cards and money are increasingly replacing traditional gifts. Although their convenience is appealing to students, some find them impersonal. "Gift-giving seems like it used to be more focused on choosing a specific present to give to someone else, but with the rise of gift cards, it's much less risky to let the recipient pick out exactly what they want," Shaker parent Nicole Pollak said.

What to buy for Mom? You could find something that she likes, but it would be much easier to buy her a gift card or give her some cash.

As the gift-giving season approaches, we begin to concern ourselves with the various factors that go into buying gifts for others. As the years progress, people have come to rely on simple things like gift cards or money as an alternative to a more meaningful present.

"Probably up until the age of 10, my grandmother would thoughtfully pick out something, and then when I turned 11, she just gave me a hundred bucks and said 'Go to it,'" social studies teacher Kyle Fleming said. "It kind of takes the meaning out of the season. The meaning is supposed to be connecting with other people."

Since their creation in 1994, gift cards have become increasingly popular as an accessible go-to gift. The National Retail Federation's Gift Card Spending Survey estimates that more than $25.9 billion will be spent on gift cards in just 2015. As gift cards become more commonplace, people have become accustomed to their impersonal aspect, creating lower expectations of gift-givers.

English teacher Halle Bauer considers the rise of gift cards a double-edged sword. "I think that gift cards have really both expanded and contracted the possibilities of giving. They expand the ability for a person to make use of gifts, but they also take away that connection that is required when you're giving a meaningful gift," she said.

Gift cards spare buyers the effort required to determine what a recipient needs or wants, and they also spare the recipient the moral dilemma of how to handle an unwanted gift. How does one deal with those ugly orange mittens from Aunt Julia that "cost a fortune?"

"If I get a gift that I don't like, I'll say that I love it and then secretly exchange it for something else," freshman Lia Gomez-Perez said. "But if you're really close with the person, you should keep it."

"It's just not genuine, it's not coming from the heart. Anyone can pull $20 out of their wallet."

KEVIN LAMONICA

Freshman Kevin LaMonica has no problems when it comes to gifts that he isn't fond of. "When I get a gift I don't like, I say thank you and then, if it's a family member, I can always return it without their knowledge," he said. "If it's a friend, I say thank you, wait till I get home, and usually just throw it away."

What about that gift for cousin Steve? Perhaps it's best to give him something easy, quick, and fail-safe: money.

However, LaMonica thinks that money is not a very heartfelt gift. "It's just not genuine, it's not coming from the heart," he said. "Anyone can pull $20 out of their wallet, anyone can go out and pay $25 for a gift card. You're not putting any thought into it."

However, some don't mind receiving cash. Junior Veronica Nickoson prefers gift cards and money. "It's the easiest thing," she said. "You don't have to buy me anything. I'll just buy it myself."

So, how do you know that the next personal gift you give won't be thrown out or returned in secret? Money isn't scorned, but in a society where giving cash has become the norm, gifts from the heart are special, and they will be remembered.

"I got a fishing pole the year my father died," said Fleming. "It was from him, and I think he knew he was dying. He bought me a really nice fishing pole the last year so that he would have something for me to remember him by."

Bauer said her best friend from high school forgot several of her birthdays. "Then one birthday, we were in college, and it just arrived at my doorstep. It was a box of hiking gear," she said. "We had always hiked together -- that was like our central activity of our friendship -- and that was very nice."

Fleming said that the best way to measure a gift's value is the time you invested in it. "It's not the money that you spend on someone, it's how the gift makes the person feel, or maybe it's a special bond between you and the person."

Nevertheless, as gift card sales illustrate, gift-giving seems to have a formality, or something someone has to do. Gifts previously wrapped with love have been replaced by plastic, temporary credit cards promising the recipient that they should buy their own happiness.

"Gift-giving seems like it used to be more focused on choosing a specific present to give to someone else, but with the rise of gift cards, it's much less risky to let the recipient pick out exactly what they want," Shaker parent Nicole Pollak said. "While this makes it less personal on the giving end, it makes it more likely for the recipient to really enjoy whatever they choose to buy."

Shaker Updates District Tech Plan

Although five-year plan promises changes, students recognize few improvements in classroom technology

EMET CELESTE-COHEN AND CHRISTOPHER MIN
JOURNALISM I REPORTERS

The group of citizens and staff gathered in the upper cafeteria. It was March 25 and their job was halfway done.

The committee of 22 began by discussing their "Technology Vision," one of the most important aspects of the Five Year Technology Plan: "The Shaker Heights City School District will be recognized as a leader in the integration of technology in transforming the teaching-learning process in order to improve student achievement."

Director of Technology and Media Services John Rizzo introduced the plan as "rooted in this simple yet vital goal -- to implement technology in a way that helps and does not hinder, that solves rather than creates problems."

The plan details six proposals: to refresh the technology infrastructure (networking and data-management), to create a more comprehensive information and technology department, to efficiently spend and raise money for new technology, to implement fresh and abandon outdated technology, to help teachers apply technology in their classrooms and to provide a learning management system to assist teachers with integration.

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

The committee hopes to finish some network renovations by the end of this school year and to fully assess technology at Shaker by the end of next.

"We are showing progress, but we still need to do much more," said Superintendent Gregory Hutchings Jr. "Technology changes very rapidly. That's why we have a Five Year Technology Plan to address our needs going forward."

Latin teacher Mary Coffey agreed. "We're moving in the right direction," she said. She was part of the committee that created the plan and is glad that the district is talking about technology.

Coffey believes that upgrading technology is an important step "that many schools have already taken." The integration "will be very easy for some and require a bit more work for others," Coffey said.

She uses technology regularly in her classroom and oversees all of the district's Moodle pages.

Coffey's classroom will also participate in testing of Google Apps for Education. This program will provide students with a school email address that will connect them to Google Classroom, a virtual classroom where teachers can distribute assignments, send feedback and see everything in one place. The district originally hoped to incorporate it by October, but due to setbacks, test use will start in January.

"Technology evolves quickly. In order to ensure our technology is reliable and able to meet current demand, we need to update our technology accordingly," Rizzo said.

"With technology, there is a constant need for improvement, and once something is improved, it isn't very long before it is considered 'old' and a new version is available," he said.

According to the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, there are "more than 26 servers and approximately 2,000 workstations [computers] in 12 buildings, running over a fiber network," across the district buildings. There are approximately 1,000 laptops in the district.

"Technology is a way of life. It is the only way all of our students can maximize their potential," Hutchings said. "Our five year plan gives us a thoughtful and strategic way to make that a reality."

"Shaker provides computer resources, in the form of desktop or laptop, that are comparable with other schools," Rizzo said .

"Looking at Shaker, and specifically the high school, improvement is needed and is planned in the five year plan," Rizzo said. "A financial outlay is necessary in order to continue moving forward with the improvement already underway."

Sophomore Allison Nurse thinks the technology "improved a lot since last year." However, she feels "it could be better."

"Our newest computers and laptops, as well as the recently upgraded computers have specifications that meet or exceed those of most computers used in an educational environment," Rizzo said.

"Performance standards can be subjective and vary based on the intended use of the computer," Rizzo continued.

"In general, boot/login speed as well as Internet browsing speed tend to be the performance standards that impact the majority of users," Rizzo said.

"Many factors can impact the performance of a computer on a given day, such as the applications being used, the sites being accessed, the amount of network traffic competing for bandwidth, etc."

"The [computers] could be more advanced," said sophomore Autumn Hamilton.

"Usually when I'm using the computers they crash or something goes wrong," said freshman Lauren Hertzer, describing a problem that is common among tech users

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Shaker's COWs, computers on wheels, are HP netbooks with slower processors, smaller screens and small trackpads. While they were purchased to be used in classrooms when a computer lab isn't avaiable, a cart does not provide enough netbooks for some classes.

"Technology evolves quickly. In order to ensure our technology is reliable and able to meet current demand, we need to update our technology accordingly."

JOHN RIZZO

throughout the district.

Computers take a long time to load, and often they lag or glitch. Sometimes apps quit, deleting entire projects.

"The computers are a little outdated. Wi-Fi is a little slow," junior Elise LaFramboise said.

Even with the comprehensive five-year plan, students say they aren't seeing enough change.

Freshman Aidan Baker said that since he came to Shaker, the technology hasn't really improved at all.

He said the technology "overall is bad in Wi-Fi, computers, smart boards, etc."

"New laptops," Baker said, "would be one way to combat the problem.

"We need something new. Nothing is ever new" he said.

This lack of change referenced by most students may just show a lack of observation. The school district did change some things over the summer.

"Most recently, several computer labs at the high school were replaced with new equipment," said Rizzo.

"In addition, all computers that were not replaced were reloaded with a fresh Windows 7 image and had [random access] memory upgraded to 4GB."

Random access memory stores information for apps and programs that the user is using.

The more RAM there is, the more apps and programs a computer can load at once without using the hard drive -- a much slower system.

Junior Nina Moore said she has noticed a change in district technology since kindergarten but that she didn't notice any changes since returning to school this year.

There is no major revamp of the technology scheduled in the five-year plan.

Shaker spent approximately $1.2 million on technology last year. Half of it went to capital outlay and another two-thirds of that went to services.

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Shaker's computers, Dell Otiplex 760 desktops, are sometimes equipped with Dual Core processors, which can make computers perform slowly when programs are open simultaneously.

"It is the only way all of our students can maximize their potential."

GREGORY C. HUTCHINGS

Exactly $210,050.95 was spent on "Materials and Supplies" such as computers, cables and monitors in the fiscal year of 2014-15, which began July 1.

According to Sue Starret, director of the Shaker Schools Foundation, the foundation supports "tech purchases that are the 'extras' or items not in the district's budget."

Currently, that money is going to "a laser cutter and new [planetarium] star machine for the high school, a new sound system for the Woodbury auditorium, digital cameras for Fernway" and more.

Freshman Matt Burnard said, "If I were in charge of that money, I would spend more each year for some nicer stuff."

"Even having keyboards that work," said senior Hoklai Chapman-Sung, "would make all the difference."

Want to join The Shakerite?
Of course you do! Not sure? Here are some perks:
• ask the tough questions and get the answers
•see your name in an award-winning news source
•take trips to big cities
Tell your counselor you want to take Journalism I.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2015 has been an eventful year, within the United States and internationally. German Chancellor Angela Merkel was voted Time's Person of the Year. Pope Francis visited the United States. ISIS claimed responsibility for attacks around the globe. The United States soccer team won the Women's World Cup. Nepal experienced a 7.8 magnitude earthquake. Black Lives Matter organized protests against discrimination. Adele emerged from retirement. Ireland, Luxembourg and the United States legalized gay marriage. Blues legend B.B. King died. Royal baby Princess Charlotte was born. As we enter the new year, let us reflect on the thrilling, gut-wrenching, tragic and beautiful moments that touched our hearts and opened our eyes.

WIKICOMMONS

Protestors boycott Black Friday shoping in New York City in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. The movement represents those who stand against racism and the killings of African-American teens such as Mike Brown and Tamir Rice.

WIKICOMMONS

Newly born Princess Charlotte rests in her mother's arms at her christening June 5. Charlotte is daughter of Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and wife Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge. She's second-born to older brother George.

MAX MARKEY//THE SHAKERITE

Democratic presidential candidate and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders greets his audience in downtown Cleveland. Shaker's IB Theory of Knowledge class took a field trip to hear Sanders speak mid-November.

A Moment to Reflect on Heartbreaking Headlines

EMILY MONTENEGRO OPINION EDITOR

WIKICOMMONS

The Eiffel Tower lit up with France's national colors Nov. 18 following ISIS-orchestrated terrorist attacks Nov. 13. The attacks targeted multiple locations around Paris including cafés, restaurants, the Stade de France stadium and a music venue, leaving 129 dead.

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes tous francais.

"Today, we are all French," the world said to France after Paris fell victim to a series of fatal attacks by the terrorist organization ISIS on Nov. 13, 2015. The message echoed France's empathetic "Today, we are all American" after Al Qaeda's attacked the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

November's assault left 129 Parisian civilians dead. France was still healing after a Jan. 7 attack on Charlie Hebdo, a satirical magazine. Two masked, armed people raided the publication's offices and killed 12 staff members. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula claimed responsibility.

With Liberty and Justice for All?

The American Civil Rights Movement did not end in the 1960s.

We like to think our melting pot country, built by immigrants and run by a black president, has left discrimination and segregation behind. The nation's minorities would beg to differ.

Much of the black population has become fiercely outspoken over 21st century racial injustices -- black children killed by police, black students threatened in their colleges and universities, and black people generally viewed as inferior.

The movement's message: Black Lives Matter.

Lending a Cup of Sugar to Refugees

Almost 9 million Syrians have fled their war-torn country in search of new beginnings.

Increasingly horrible survival stories continue to surface as refugees find asylum in a slowly welcoming world.

The Land of the Free is still iffy about the situation, but European countries have rapidly decided to close their gates to the incoming flood of refugees. They were criticized after news organizations published greusome images of a small boy who drowned during his family's attempt to reach safety.

Many have slammed their doors -- or built a fence, in Hungary's case -- to ward off immigrants. Few others opened their minds, hearts, homes and wallets to their global neighbors.

America the Decent-Looking, Constantly Evolving

Keeping Up With the Candidates

The 2016 presidential campaign was off to the races this year. It's a bit early to generalize, but I've created a rough analogy from what I've gathered. Debates are much like awkward family dinners. Here are the members:

Donald Trump: animated uncle whose opinions are larger than his hair

Bernie Sanders: fresh and hip grandpa who reads New York Times articles for bedtime stories

Hillary Clinton: aunt who recommends Trivial Pursuit as a post-dinner boardgame, barely suppressing her eye rolls at incorrect answers

Ben Carson: cousin who quietly chews his green beans before launching into a rather random, possibly true story

Taste the Rainbow

In the game of life, love wins. June 26, 2015 -- a great day for the American LGBT community -- was no exception to this rule after the Supreme Court deemed bans on gay marriage unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment. Apparently, preventing humans from marrying their loved ones isn't "cool." Huh! Whaddya know.

WIKICOMMONS

Citizens of San Francisco show support for the LGBT community at the pride parade June 28. The parade followed the landmark Supreme Court Case, Obergefell v. Hodges, that legalized same-sex marriage in all 50 states.

When to Use Hello, Shakerite's Word of the Year

ADELE.COM//ALEXANDRA WAESPI

Adele's comback album, "25," kicked off with the release of her single "Hello." The song instantly skyrocketed to the top of the charts, and its music video, directed by Xavier Dolan, has more than 6 million views on YouTube. As for "25," it sold 3.38 million copies in its first week in the U.S., the first album to sell more than 3 million copies in a single week.

When you call your ride in the hallway

Hello? Can you hear me? The same five words that Adele asks the world in her first single since retirement, "Hello." Hardly surprising how quickly the soulful pop ballad launched its way up the charts. No more "rolling in the deep" for the crooning legend -- only rolling in cash. "Hello" has been on the top of the iTunes list since it was released.

When a spider resides in your shower

WHOA, uh, hello there! Also the reaction of Snapchat users once they figured out how to access the recently added filters. The selection has covered googly eyes, zombies, rainbow puke and everything in between. Too bad Snapchat had to slap a price on the silly new feature. The sobbing filter was great for dramatic 10 second music videos.

When your food arrives late

Um, hel-lo?! It's about time! Probably how Viola Davis felt when she won the Emmy for Best Actress in a Drama -- and was the first African American to do so. Davis accepted the award in the most elegant way possible, thanking the writers who are finally creating powerful dramatic roles for black women. Better late than never, Academy, but still really, really late.

Don't be Late For Your New Year's Resolution

2016 is the year to actually get in shape after telling your friends and family, "New year, new you."

Forget the pesky treadmill and obnoxious elliptical. The high school's recently implemented tardy policy is the workout for you, guaranteed to have you sprinting to every class. Run, Forrest, run away from the tardy line! Motivational mantra: A deep lunge a day keeps the green slips away.

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Follow us on Twitter @TheShakerite

LOYALTY TREADS ON THIN ICE

DON BENINCASA//THE SHAKERITE

The Cleveland Browns' humiliating performance since they came back to the city in 1999 is starting to take a toll on the fans and their interest. Compared to the packed crowds of the successful '80s Browns, the stadium was half empty during the third quarter of the Dec. 6 game against the Cincinnati Bengals.

Danger of younger Browns' fans losing interest continues to grow

DON BENINCASA JOURNALISM 1 REPORTER

The kick was airborne for a second until Browns' fans hopes of actually winning a game were shattered.

With three seconds remaining, the Browns were tied 30-30 with the Ravens at FirstEnergy Stadium Nov. 30 -- their first Monday Night Football appearance in six years.

The 51-yard field goal attempt was blocked, of course, and because it was the Browns, returned 64 yards for a touchdown, a Baltimore win and yet another reason why young residents of Cleveland may abandon their parents' loyalty to a once-beloved organization.

The Cleveland Browns had found another way to lose a football game, something Browns fans sadly have grown accustomed to since the team was re-created in 1999.

Cleveland has been to the playoffs only once in the past 16 years. The past seasons have seen bad draft picks, 24 different starting quarterbacks and relentlessly disappointing Sundays for Browns fans.

The franchise faces a dangerous problem because of their continuous losing. They might just lose the attention of a younger, high school generation.

Shaker Heights High School students have seen only one playoff appearance in their lifetimes, after season after season of humiliation.

Former Browns quarterback Bernie Kosar, whose children are teenagers, recognizes the risk.

"My kids, yourself, aren't seeing a winning tradition that's expected, and I wonder how that's going to affect your generation," Kosar said in a telephone interview. He emphasized the importance of Browns fans caring for the organization by relating a story about Art Modell, owner of the original Browns.

Before Kosar's first playoff game as a Brown, Modell told him, "I don't care if [fans] love me or hate me. As long as [they] care."

"Art Modell said, 'I don't care if [fans] love me. As long as [they] care.'"

BERNIE KOSAR

ClevelandSportsMemes
Follow
After a #Browns loss I often drive around looking disheveled muttering nonsense to myself.

It seems inevitable that young Browns fans might lose interest in the team.

At this point in the season, the Browns sit on a record of 3-10 with no hope of making the playoffs. The team has a revolving-door position at quarterback with Josh McCown, Johnny Manziel and Austin Davis having all started at one point.

"It's groundhog day in Cleveland. And it kills me cause I was born and raised there," said former Brown Mike Golic, now an ESPN commentator. "But right now, if you're a Cleveland Browns fan, the thing you have to hang your head the most about is the fact that we are again back to square one."

The Browns have a porous defense that is

struggling this year, especially with stopping running backs, which is ironic because the Browns defense is the highest paid defense in the league.

"[Fans] shouldn't quit on the team, but it would make sense if they were to quit on them," sophomore Nate Cowan said.

Mike Polk, the comedian made popular by his "Factory of Sadness" rant on the Browns, said this Browns season is different than the other losing seasons.

"There is a sense of hopelessness surrounding the team this year the likes of which I have never seen," Polk said in an email interview.

He also blamed the fans for this situation. "We don't punish the team the way that they deserve to be punished. The way that forces change. We just keep supporting this terrible product regardless of what they parade out there. If you're any business owner and you are putting out a lazy, inferior product, using bad ingredients and cheap, incompetent management," said Polk. "Where is the motivation to change?"

Social Studies teacher Brian Berger is a Browns fan forcing a change in the franchise. Berger said he is not going to renew his season tickets this year.

"It is wasting money," he said, noting that the cost of his tickets have doubled this year and that it's not worth wasting his whole Sunday watching a team play so poorly. He said his Browns experience recently is "just disappointing."

DON BENINCASA//THE SHAKERITE

Disgusted Browns fans leaving early during the third quarter of a Browns game on Dec. 6. The Browns suffered a 37-3 loss to the Cincinnati Bengals.

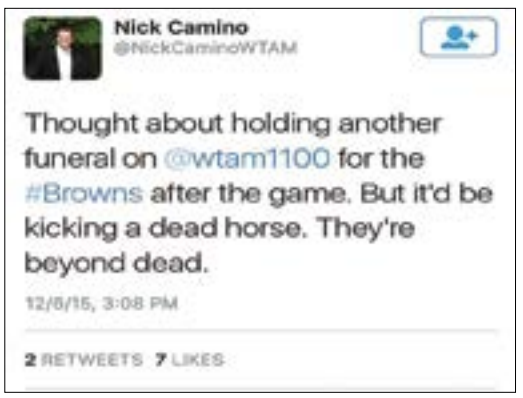
Season tickets cost $19-$85 per home game last season, but the Browns boosted the prices to $25-$110 this season, according to cleveland.com.

According to ESPN, this boost, along with the team's performance, has caused the average attendance for a Browns game to drop almost 1,000 people per game.

Yet many Browns fans still haven't given up on their team.

People old and young alike still go to the games and turn on CBS Sports to watch and cheer on their Browns.Browns fans are known for sticking by their team through the pain and disappointment of any loss.

According to cleveland.com, "Fans continue to sell out FirstEnergy Stadium... watching a team that hasn't rewarded them with a winning season since 2007 and a playoff appearance since 2002."


Nick Camino
@NickCaminoWTAM
Thought about holding another funeral on @wtam1100 for the #Browns after the game. But it'd be kicking a dead horse. They're beyond dead.
12/6/15, 3:08 PM
2 RETWEETS 7 LIKES

Like other optimistic Browns fans, Shaker students still give the team their support each week.

"Just loyal, it's who we are ... We are the best fans in the league," said sophomore Ben Greenberg.

While the older generation did experience an era in which the Browns had success with players such as Kosar, Brian Sipe, Ozzie Newsome and Hanford Dixon, the younger generation has experienced disappointing season after disappointing season. The veteran Browns fans experienced the golden years of the franchise.

They witnessed the Kardiac Kids coming back again and again, only to have their season end in the devastating Red Right 88 interception, thrown by Sipe. They witnessed the Browns advancing to the AFC championship year after year, only to have their dreams crushed by the Denver Broncos in games gloomily nicknamed "The Fumble" and "The Drive."

Like the team's fans in this era, they experienced disappointment, too, but at least they got to see the Browns succeed and get to the playoffs frequently. Students have grown up watching the Browns so many close games, constantly finding ways to blow it at the end.

This ongoing theme of failure is why the Cleveland Browns' popularity might just be in jeopardy.

"There will always be loyal Browns fans, but in this generation there could be a decline," said Greenberg.

"I hate my parents for making me a Browns fan."

WYATT EISEN

Dabwick Hamilton
@C_Hammy1
To be honest, Cleveland only has two professional sports teams. The browns don't count
11/30/15, 11:50 PM

Yet, while many might give up on the Browns just because of their lack of success, maybe supporting a team isn't about winning at all.

The Browns are a tradition in many Shaker households.

Junior Wyatt Eisen said he is very resentful of his parents for raising him to support the Browns.

"I hate my parents for making me a Browns fan," he said.

However, Eisen said being raised as a Browns fan, along with needing to support his hometown team, is reason enough to remain a Browns supporter.

Sophomore Torrey Roper said, "I watch the Browns passionately every Sunday." Roper almost broke his TV one time after a loss.

He said he cheers on the team because he will never abandon his hometown city by supporting another team. He said proudly, "CLE 'til I die."

In a telephone interview, Plain Dealer sportswriter Terry Pluto said the reason that fans stick with the team is tradition.

"It's a family thing. It's almost generational," Pluto said.

Older Browns fans pass on their memories of Jim Brown, Paul Brown and other Browns legends to the younger fans, giving them hope that the Browns' luck might change.

Veteran Browns fan Margaret Watson stated in an email that she remembers Kosar, The Drive and The Fumble.

"My parents were huge Browns fans. My mother still watches every Sunday. They were season ticket holders when the Browns were winning with Otto Graham and Jim Brown.

"I still believe we can get back to that," she said.

Fans' continued interest in the Browns is truly extraordinary.

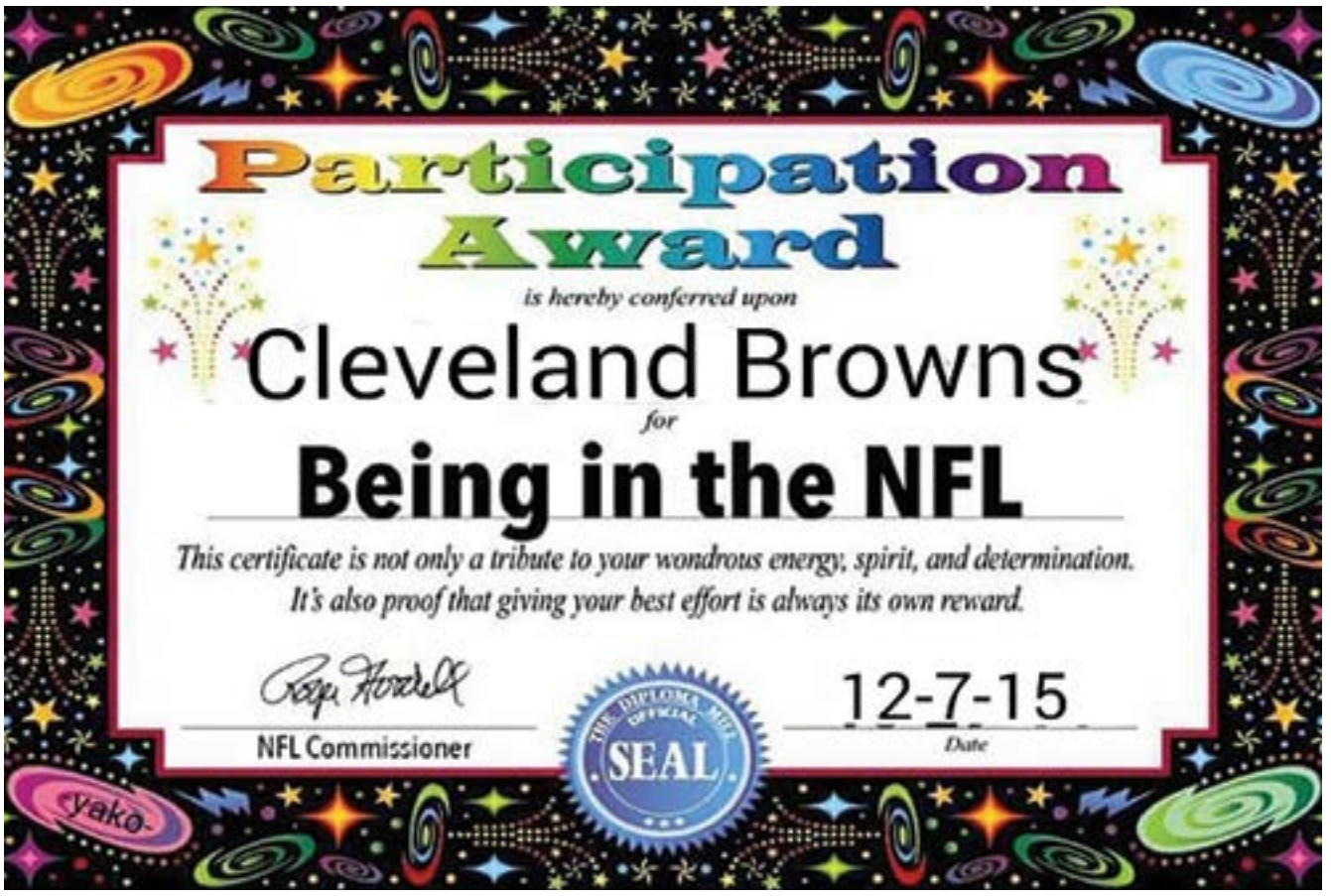
The franchise has had almost no success since they came back to Cleveland in 1999, after Modell moved the original Browns to Baltimore, creating the Baltimore Ravens. The NFL created a new Browns franchise, and some joke that it is curesed.

Pluto said the constant failure does not seem to impact fans. He believes the franchise's fan base has stayed strong is because "the NFL has a way of selling hope."

The NFL draft is just one example of this hope. Every year, the Browns have a chance to draft players whose arrival will have a big impact on the team.

Yet year after year the Browns have made the wrong picks, selecting draft busts such as Trent Richardson, Brandon Weeden and Brady Quinn.

Nevertheless, fans still tune in every year for the draft, always hoping to land that star player that will lead the Browns out of the abyss.



In this Facebook post, a Browns fan ridicules the team for their embarrassing performance. The Browns sit at 3-10, tied for the worst record in the NFL.

I myself have a deep emotional connection with the Browns.

My dad has been a season ticket holder for al, most 15 years and I have grown up cheering on our loveable losers. I went to my first game before I entered kindergarten, not even knowing my ABCs. As soon as I saw a game in Cleveland Browns Stadium, at the age of 5, I fell in love.

Don Benincasa
Journalism I Reporter

There's nothing like being around thousands of fans cheering on the team, ridiculing the team, and eventually being disappointed with the almost predictable conclusion of a loss.

I learned players' names, the team's history and about football itself.

While most kids liked to play with Legos and video games, I wanted to talk football. The Browns will always stick with me no matter where I end up living when I'm older, or how poorly the team continues to perform each season.

We Browns fans identify ourselves as a tough group, showing optimism every year no matter what. We celebrate the same team and commit ourselves to supporting one of the worst teams in the NFL year after year.

"It's a lot more than just supporting a winning team," sports psychologist Jack J. Leysk said.

"Being a fan gives us an identity and membership in a large group of people who share the same passion. The connection with others and shared passion are very strong and enduring.

"This includes the sharing of disappointments as well as the successes."

And besides, the losses now will make a future Brown's Super Bowl win taste that much sweeter.

History of the Browns

1946 Cleveland Browns formed by Arthur McBride and legendary coach Paul Brown.
1950 The Browns leave the All American Football Conference and join the National Football League.
1951-1953 Browns lose three straight championships.
1954-1955 Cleveland Browns win back-to-back championships.
1957 Browns legendary running back Jim Brown selected in the draft.
1964 Cleveland Browns win the NFL championship.
1966 Jim Brown retires after only nine seasons at age 30.
1981 Brian Sipe throws costly interception in playoffs against Oakland Raiders in play infamously called "Red Right 88," and Browns lose 12-14.
1986 Denver Broncos defeat the Browns 23-20 in overtime of AFC Championship in game called "The Drive."
1987 Running back Earnest Byner fumbles at the goal line at the end of the AFC Championship, and Browns lose again to the Broncos in game called "The Fumble."
1995 Art Modell moves franchise to Baltimore, known as "The Move."
1999 The franchise is recreated.
2002 Browns blow 24-7 lead against Pittsburg Steelers in their only playoff game since they have returned to the city.

DON BENINCASA

Browns' fans walk home after a 37-3 loss against the Cincinnati Bengals Dec. 6. Fans remain loyal despite the team's disappointing performance since 1999. Fans continue to pay for tickets in spite of an increase in home game ticket prices and little success.

College Athletes Can Challenge Campus Racism

College athletes may be on the verge of winning much more than just games.

But if they lose, everybody loses.

At the University of Missouri, football players refused to play if the administration did not improve the way it was handling racial tensions. The school's administration agreed to meet the team's demands, and System President Tim Wolfe stepped down.

Alexa Jankowsky
Raider Zone Editor

Prior to the football players intervening, students were already protesting the school's lack of response to racism on campus. Student group Concerned Student 1950 - referencing the first year black students were allowed to attend the school - released a list of demands, including that Wolfe acknowledge his mishandling of the racial problems the university was facing and step down. A graduate student at the school, Jonathan Butler, went on a hunger strike until the school made changes.

The day after the football player's refusal to play, Wolfe released a statement saying the school would launch an investigation into the racism on campus. The next day Wolfe resigned.

The Division I program revenue brings in thousands of dollars to the school. In 2008, the team earned more than $55 million for the University. Before the football team threatened to stop playing, little was done to address the students' concerns; afterwards, the administration agreed to achnowledge the issue.

Football teams not only wield influence on a school's administration, but also influence the school's student body.

"For many schools, [sports teams] contribute to the school spirit. So they can also contribute to these causes," said field hockey and lacrosse senior, Bridget Mitchell. Mitchell will play lacrosse at the University of Colorado Boulder next year.

Popular teams can easily reach out to students and use their fame to advocate for change among students and fans outside of the school. College football drew in as many as 33.4 million viewers in 2014, according to the National Football Federation - the largest audience in cable history.

The Missouri team's achievements raises the question: should football players be expected to use their influence to fight against racism? Should all college athletes?

"When student athletes play, they are representing their school, and the school's actions reflect upon them," Mitchell said.

However, refusing to play is risky. Athletes jeopardize scholarships. In some cases, those scholarships are their only means to attend the school they are playing for. Athletes attending college on scholarship are already under pressure to train and compete; adding other responsibilities is not on every athlete's agenda.

This is what makes what the Missouri football team's actions so admirable: they risked scholarship and possibly education, as well as personal athletic goals and playing the sport they love, to stand up for a greater cause.

Racism on college campuses is becoming more and more evident. From fraternities and sororities chanting racist slurs to college security targeting male African American students, the racism is evident. It is unacceptable that little is being done to put an end to it.

Athletes, especially football players, hold financial power over universities and can reach out and unite other students. As Missouri's team demonstrated, athletes have the power to affect change.

"I feel like ending racism on campus is a bigger issue than having a scholarship revoked," senior Justyn Moore said. Moore plans to run track and cross-country in college.

More than 170,000 student-athletes compete in Division I NCAA sports each year. If most of these athletes stopped playing until colleges made efforts to end racism, colleges would have no choice. It is unlikely that, with a mass effort, all athletes would lose their scholarships and not be allowed to play.

A major source of revenue would disappear, and finding a replacement for every athlete would put a large strain on universities. Not only would it be inconvenient for colleges, but the institutions would also no longer be able to deny that racism on campuses is a problem.

Though athletes have the stature to advocate for change, the responsibility to strive for equality should not only fall to athletes, but to everyone.

"I think not only athletes, but people in general, have an obligation to speak up," said senior field hockey and lacrosse player Jessica Morford, who will play field hockey at Indiana University.

Shaker has long prided itself on being a diverse, open-minded place. We are exposed to ethnicities and cultures different from our own, and given the opportunity to discuss racial issues through organizations such as the Student Group On Race Relations. This gives us the skills necessary to make changes on college campuses, to speak up when we see racism because we recognize it as wrong.

Senior Clay Brady will play lacrosse at Fairfield University. Brady said "It would almost be a letdown as a school system if after everything the average student has gone through they didn't."

Journalism I Reporter Claire Ockner contributed reporting.

MIZZOULBC//TWITTER

The Legion of Black Collegians posted a picture of the protesting University of Missouri football players. LBC captioned the picture "We are no longer taking it. It's time to fight. #ConcernedStudent1950 #MizzouHungerStrike." LBC is a group created to "develop a lasting appreciation of social, moral, intellectual, and most of all, cultural values" and raise cultural consciousness on the University of Missouri campus. The group was targeted on campus with racial slurs. During a rehearsal for their play, the group was interrupted by other students yelling racist insults at them.

"It would almost be a letdown as a school system if after everything the average student has gone through they didn't."

CLAY BRADY

One Team Just is Not Enough Basketball for Shaker Athletes

Students turn to extramural basketball leagues to get their fix

NED WEINGART RAIDER ZONE EDITOR

In Shaker, basketball is more than just a game. Every year, home opener tickets sell out days in advance, and Raider basketball games are consistently packed with loud and spirited student sections as they cheer on one of the best programs in the state. Basketball is a major part of Shaker's culture, but there is another aspect of Shaker's love of basketball that is not as apparent.

Not every Shaker student is cut out for, or wants to play in, Shaker's programs. So students get their basketball fix playing the sport outside of school.

The three most popular leagues for Shaker students are the Cleveland Jewish Basketball League, Catholic Youth Organization Basketball and Greek Orthodox Youth Association Basketball.

Senior Justin Bernstein helped start the Matzah-ballers, a Jewball team comprising Shaker students, during his freshman year. For Bernstein, finding people to play basketball with has never been a challenge.

"My freshman year, my friends and I would play basketball every day when the weather was nice, and one day we decided to make a team," Bernstein said. "We got a lot of positive feedback around the school, and it was really easy to find 10 Shaker guys who also wanted to play."

CYO basketball player senior Caroline Murphy believes that basketball is a great pastime for Shaker students.

"I started playing CYO basketball my freshman year because I heard from friends who told me it was really fun, and it's been a great way to see friends and stay active," she said. "Although I'm not the best at it, I love watching and playing basketball, and CYO has been a great experience for me."

Senior Jason Ramsay, who has played Greekball since 7th grade, started playing because of friends in his church and his love for the sport.

"Most kids in my church play basketball, so when I was old enough to play, I decided to give it a try," Ramsay said. "I've always loved basketball and I thought it would be a great way to stay involved in my church and have fun."

"One day we decided to make a team ... It was really easy to find 10 Shaker guys who also wanted to play."

JUSTIN BERNSTEIN

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Shaker Junior Jeremy Gimbel and senior Justin Bernstein on offense during a recent Matzah-ballers game at the JCC.

Junior Peter Parras also found an opportunity to play through church.

"I started playing basketball in third grade because I had always loved the game as a young kid and a lot of my friends started playing for the church," Parras said.

Murphy said that she probably could not play in Shaker's competitive program.

"If I was a little more into the sport and was a little better I would want to try out, but I would definitely be intimidated by how good the other girls are," Murphy said.

Parras agreed that Shaker's competitive nature would make it tough for him to play for the school.

"I've been playing basketball all my life, but I don't think I would have a chance to play basketball at Shaker on the varsity level," Parras said. "I specialize in three- point shooting, and every team needs a good shooter, so maybe I could find a place in the Shaker program, but I would honestly rather play Greekball with my friends and have fun than try to play in Shaker's super -competitive program."

These outside of school leagues aren't just popular for Shaker students hoping to play basketball, but also students who want to watch their favorite sport. Jewball and CYO games have been known to draw more Shaker students than some Shaker varsity sports.

Senior Jacob Voyzey is an avid Jewball

fan and frequently attends games at the Jewish Community Center in Beachwood, known by fans as the J.

"I go to Jewball games because I love supporting friends, and there's always a good game atmosphere at the J," Voyzey said.

Voyzey even bought a Matzah-ballers T-shirt to show his support of the team.

Bernstein really enjoys having Shaker students in the bleachers at Matzah-ballers games.

"I can tell a lot of teams are envious of us because we draw the largest crowd by far," Bernstein said. "Having your friends to support you before, during and after the game is amazing and makes all the hard work and effort worthwhile."

"It's especially nice because we don't get much recognition because we're not a Shaker varsity team," Bernstein said.

Senior Matzah-baller Josh Podl agreed that the Matzah-ballers' comparatively sizable fan section gives them an advantage.

"We always have more fans than our competition, which makes me feel like we have a home-court advantage, which elevates our play as a team," Podl said.

Podl said Jewball is a very different experience from Shaker's program.

"I started playing Jewball sophomore year. I played in Shaker's program from fourth grade through ninth grade, but Jewball has been so much more fun," Podl said. "I get to have a good time with my friends, and you can be as competitive or as laid back as you want."

For Podl, Jewball has allowed him to resume playing basketball in the style he prefers.

"In my last two years playing for Shaker, my coaches only saw me as a spot-up shooter and regulated me to a limited role. I was given limited playing time and limited touches, which made it hard for me to find a rhythm and play the way I wanted," he said. "Jewball has been completely different, and I'm able to handle the ball a lot more and create shots for myself and my teammates.

"My defensive ability is also valued much more, and I've really been able to showcase my versatility and show that I'm not just a one-dimensional player," Podl said.

For senior CYO player Colleen Bradley, the competitive atmosphere, diverse skills and mental aspects of basketball are appealing.

"I love basketball because it lets me play both offense and defense and it's so fast-paced and competitive," Bradley said. "I play point guard, so mentally I have to be sharp and I love directing plays and making things happen."

Podl also thrives on the intangible aspects of the game.

"Over the past few years I've grown to appreciate the mental aspects of basketball, and I've worked very hard on staying positive whenever I miss a couple shots," Podl said. "I also like trying to read my opponents' minds and get in their heads. I like taking advantage of when they get frustrated, whether that be talking a little trash or letting my play do the talking."

AUDIE LORENZO//THE SHAKERITE

Shaker students in attendance at a Matzah-ballers game at the Jewish Community Center in Beachwood. Jewball games feature teams from the Cleveland area that are organized into two leagues. The league champions play a title game. Last year, it was held at Quicken Loans Arena.

"We always have more fans than our competition, which makes me feel like we have a home-court advantage, which elevates our play as a team."

JOSH PODL

Athletes can determine how intense the games become.

"Greekball is really just as competitive as you want it to be," Ramsay said. "In some tournaments you see teams that are just there for fun and some some teams that are really there to fight to win."

Shaker students have done very well in these basketball leagues. The Matzah-ballers were the Community League Division Champions and made it to the Community-B'na B'rith Youth Organization Championship game, which was played downtown at Quicken Loans Arena. Shaker CYO and Greekball players have also been very competitive in tournaments and the Gesu CYO team, which features many Shaker players, made it to the the CYO state championship final four in 2013.

Parras believes basketball is Shaker's overall favorite sport as a community.

"I think Shaker is unique because we have a lot of different sports represented, but I think basketball is really the most popular," he said. "Sports like hockey and lacrosse and soccer are really popular at Shaker, but with the overall student body, basketball is the most popular sport to watch and play."

Ramsay believes that Shaker students love basketball so much because it offers more than just an athletic outlet.

"While it may seem like we're just trying to win the game or a tournament, the whole point of it is to bring people together and celebrate sportsmanship and competition," said Ramsay. "At the end of the day, whether we we win or lose, I am still proud of my improvement and am happy to be able to have fun with my friends playing a game that I love."

For Bernstein, having teammates always by his side is what makes basketball special.

"The camaraderie of being on such a close-knit team is definitely what makes basketball special in my mind," Bernstein said.

"There's nothing like knocking down a contested three and being swarmed by your teammates or coming back and winning a tough game with your best friends."

Check out Raider Zone on Twitter! @RZ_Shakerite

The Shakerite Offers 2016 Predictions

1. Beyonce, alarmed by the current state of the presidential election, will nominate herself -- and win.

2. Trump is revealed to be a robot. Enough said.

3. 2016 Academy Awards Best Picture: the heartwarming story of E. T. and Gollum's love child.

Heard in the Halls

"I have a crush on Whoopi Goldberg!"

Nov. 30, 11:48 a.m.

"My mom is going to ground me if I order another uber."

Nov. 17, 10:25 a.m.

"My aunt is a Jesus freak. I mean, I love Jesus, but JEEZ."

Nov. 20, 7:53 a.m.

"The reason these hallways are so crowded is because of people's hairdos."

Dec. 2, 1:11 p.m.

7 Ways to Avoid 'Star Wars 7' Spoilers

NORA SPADONI AND ELLA SHLONSKY

1. Immediately start talking about how much you love Trump's platform.
2. Ask them about college.
3. RUN.
4. Start singing "Hamilton."
5. Ask if there's a difference between "Star Wars" and "Star Trek."
6. Say "I'm gonna destroy you like Luke Skywalker destroyed the Death Star."
7. Ask them about their thoughts on string theory.

Want to read more stories that will keep you sane during finals week? ***Visit www.shakerite.com***

2015: Year of the Meh
Sara Mesiano

1. Trump
2. The Meh List
3. Snapchat filters
4. Starting school a week early
5. The Cavs losing
6. Jon Stewart leaving
7. 50 Shades of Grey
8. Trivia Crack
9. The Browns. Again.
10. Sweetie Fry Closing

Surviving the College Mail Onslaught

SARA MESIANO

SARA MESIANO//THE SHAKERITE

The story is simple. You, a fresh-faced and naive sophomore, are slowly working your way through the endless paperwork-filling portion of the PSAT. The proctor introduces the next step, giving colleges permission to contact you. "Sure," you think, "I'd love to get some more information about some colleges!"

Little did you know, you just signed yourself up for a constant barrage of leaflets, pamphlets, booklets and every other type of -let imaginable. Soon, receiving four or five letters and 15 to 20 emails everyday becomes the norm, and, as the stress of junior and senior year tightens its grip, it becomes impossible to keep up.

Raider Rant

There are brochures replete with pictures of a smiling, diverse student body, formulaic emails that range from friendly to forebodding, and of course, the massive 20-page, bound booklets, proving that colleges have a seemingly unlimited marketing budget.

Because this is really the best way to choose a school, right? Based on how much money they spend on recruiting applicants? And it is applicants they're recruiting, not students.

The chilling fact of the matter is that the more people who apply to their school, the more people those schools are able to reject. And somehow, we've come to equate small acceptance rates with prestige. The five schools sitting atop the infamous U.S News and Report National Universities Rankings all have acceptance rates under 8 percent.

The bottom line: Colleges need to stop acting like Wal-mart and prove they're focused on education, not reputation.

Read the whole column on ***shakerite.com***

FINALS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, Jan. 12	8:30-11:30 a.m.	Social Studies	1-4 p.m.	Math
Wednesday, Jan. 13	8:30-11:30 a.m.	English	1-4 p.m.	Science
Thursday, Jan. 14	8:30-11:30 a.m.	World Language	1-4 p.m.	Make-Up
Friday, Jan. 15	8:30-11:30 a.m.	Make-Up	1-4 p.m.	Make-Up

4-Second App Reviews

SARAH GRUBE AND CHRISTOPHER MIN

Stop!, the game that pulls you in until it rips you out.

Clash of Clans? Still relevant? No.

The forum for pretentious candids.

Shakerite stories on the go. Shameless self promotion.

THE SHAKERITE
DEC. 17, 2015
Volume 86 // Issue 3

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